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Wayfarers of the Bible

BY

DAVID JAMES BURRELL

PASTOR OF THE MARBLE COLLEGIATE CHURCH, NEW YORK

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO

Fleming H. Revell Company

LONDON AND EDINBURGH

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FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY

New York: 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago: 123 North Wabash Ave.
Toronto: 25 Richmond Street, W.
London: 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh: 100 Princes Street

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PREFACE

In this Book the Author makes an Outline of History, tracing it by Journeys as milestones, from the Creation to the Advent of Christ.

Of these Journeys, nine are worthy to be called Migrations, by reason of their far-reaching influence on the history of the race; namely, II, III, IV, VI, VIII, X, XVII, XVIII, and XX.

The others are important not merely as connectives, but as sidelights; for example, The Flight of Moses brings out the condition of the Israelites in Egypt; Samson on the Road to Timnath shows the state of affairs during the period of the Judges; the Wanderings of the Ark and the Visit of the Queen of Sheba illustrate the Undivided Kingdom; the fateful Visit of Esther to the Banquet-hall of Ahasuerus discloses the Sorrows of the Captivity; and the Walk Through Rome on a Dark Night draws a sharp contrast between the world Before Christ and Christian civilization.

The Lesson is one of Confidence. God's Word makes optimists. Every time the world rolls around it rolls a little further into the light. The paths of History shine "more and more unto the perfect day."

If any further word of introduction be needed let John Bunyan speak it:

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"This book it chalketh out before thine eyes
The man that seeks the everlasting prize:
It shows you whence he comes, whither he goes,
What he leaves undone; also what he does:
It also shows you how he runs, and runs,
Till he unto the Gate of Glory comes:
It shows, too, who set out for life amain,
As if the lasting crown they would obtain;
Here also you may see the reason why
They lose their labor, and like fools do die.

. . . . . .

This book will make a traveller of thee,
If by its counsel thou wilt ruled be."

WAYFARERS OF THE BIBLE

JOURNEY I

IN WHICH ADAM AND EVE, WITH DOWNCAST FACES, LEAVE THE GARDEN OF DELIGHTS

If evolution* is a fact, the whole Genesis story is a fable. Adam and Eve must be conceived of as a pair of primordial apes, differentiated from their fellows only by the operation of such laws as natural selection and survival of the fittest, and quite as incapable of moral or immoral action as "Mrs. Crowley" or any of the other so-called "primates" at the Zoo.

The God of the story is a mere freak of the imagination, as vague and shadowy as the figure that issued from the bottle of Sindbad the Sailor. Not that there may not be a God somewhere in the universe, but simply that, according to this theory of evolution, he is enjoined from taking any part in the Drama of Life.

* The word is used here as defined by scientific evolutionists who propose to account for the universe by the operation of natural law with no interposition from any quarter, and who allow no evidence in support of their theory except that of the five physical senses. There are those who call themselves "theistic evolutionists," holding to Creation and Providence and insisting on the development of "all things after their kind"; but the real Jews of evolution regard these as Samaritans and have no fraternal dealings with them.

The incidents in the Garden are collated from the folklore of the primitive nations. In the controversy respecting the truth of the Scriptures the critics of the mischievous left wing, standing on the postulates of evolution, are quite correct in affirming that the Book of Genesis is made up of fairy tales as empty of fact and practically as insignificant as the wonder-tales of "Cinderella" and "Jack and the Bean-stalk."

They say "There is no science in the Bible"; and this is so far true as that the Bible was not intended primarily to be a scientific book. We affirm, nevertheless, that in the province of scientific literature there is no book more scientific than the Bible, if by science we mean knowledge founded on facts. The Book of Genesis is *par excellence* the Book of Origins. It comes most effectively to the scientist's aid in resolving problems which with all his searches and researches he can never find out.

The expulsion from Paradise is in evidence. It explains some things which are otherwise inexplicable, to wit:

I. *The Origin of the Race.*

Here are two figures issuing from the Garden. Who are they? I have no desire to caricature the evolutionary view of this matter, in the least degree. If it were put on canvas, by its own advocates, in plain colors and with a pre-Raphaelite regard for detail, the picture would look like this: A pair of "hairy quadrupeds, arboreal in their habits" (*sic* Darwin), coming out of a forest with chattering teeth. In desperate haste they spring from bough to bough of the

overarching trees, making use of their bony paws and prehensile tails, or leap along the ground on all-fours, emitting indistinguishable cries through their black, protruding lips. These be thy progenitors, O self-respecting man!

I confess to a family pride which revolts at this version of the narrative. If evolution, as indicated, were a demonstrated fact, we should be obliged as reasonable men to accept it with all the "appurtenances pertaining thereunto"; but to ask us to embrace a mere hypothesis on such terms is a gratuitous insult to our common sense.

It is fortunate that science, properly so-called, makes no such claim. Its affirmations, so far as founded on established facts, are these:

First, Man is a unique being, separated by a number of unbridged chasms from all the lower orders of life. His main distinction is indicated by Sir William Hamilton in these terms: "Man is not an organism but an intelligence served by organs."

Second, All established facts go to show that the whole race is of common origin and that its origin was in a single pair; or, as stated by Paul on Mars Hill, "All nations of men are of one blood."

Third, The investigations of anthropologists indicate that primitive man was constitutionally as perfect as the man of these days. The oldest skeleton shows that he was physically all there. The Pleiocene skull suggests the same endowment of perceptive and reflective power.

But when science has gone thus far, it knits its brow and vainly asks, "Whence came he?" At this point

Revelation comes to the aid of science, saying, "In the beginning God created man in his own image and after his likeness. He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." And it follows up this statement with those ancient genealogies which seem to the cursory reader of Scripture as dry as Homer's catalogue of ships, but which are indeed the anthropologist's best aid. They do not carry us back through a series of unfounded hypotheses to what Thomas Carlyle calls "an origin in frogspawn," but they lead us from generation to generation until, erect and self-respecting, we find ourselves descended from Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was the son of God.

So testify the Scriptures. It was a man and woman who left the Garden of Eden. Our first parents were not anthropoids, but *anthropoi;* a fully developed human pair, royally equipped in body and mind, rational and responsible, able to think God's thoughts after him.

II. *We have here also an account of the origin of sin.*

As to the *fact* of sin there is no difference of opinion. Observation and experience alike affirm that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." The assertions of science in this connection are two:

First, Sin is here and it has apparently no right to be here. It is not an essential or organic part of the human constitution. If a man in charge of a Corliss engine were to discover, one morning, that every wheel

and piston-rod and pinion were out of order, all things grating and creaking and going wrong, he would say, "A foreign factor has somehow gotten into this machine." And this statement would be scientifically correct as applied to the human race. Man is the only mechanism in the universe which is everywhere and always out of gear. The Vegetable Kingdom obeys the laws of its being; so does the solar system; so does every living creature except man. The obsolete word *anomy*, meaning "without law," furnishes the scientific definition of sin.

Second, Science takes cognizance of suffering as consequent on sin. It is a fact, without reference to Scripture, that the evolution of the law of man's being is bound to involve him in suffering. Lawlessness itself is subject to law; the law being, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." This is what the Buddhists call *Karma*, "the law of consequences." Thus suffering is accounted for by referring it to sin: but here also science knits its brow and vainly asks, "Whence came sin?"

At this point Scripture comes in again to help science out. It points to the two figures issuing from the gate of Paradise and makes the following affirmations concerning them:

First, This man and woman were created in a state of innocency: that is, they were wholly free from sin.

Second, They were placed in a garden, where everything was favorable to their continued happiness and development into better things.

Third, They were there subjected to trial. To raise the question of justice in this connection is impertinent

and inconsequential. The question is purely one of necessity. Their ignorant innocence was merely a temporary condition. They must inevitably move out of it into either sin or righteousness. Mere innocency has no moral quality; it is the negative whiteness of a marble image. Character is positive; only rational and responsible beings can have it; and trial alone can develop it. When innocency has successfully passed the ordeal, it becomes righteousness, like gold tried in the fire.

Fourth, They failed to pass the ordeal; and in failing they lost not only their innocence, but the splendid possibility of gaining a positive disposition toward holiness and a fixed habit of obedience, which would have made them morally like God.

Fifth, Then came suffering, in the necessity of the case. This is the Expulsion from Eden. The Fall entailed the forfeiture of the peace which is conditioned on righteousness. The Garden of Delights is for those who keep company with God. Paradise is ever lost by sin, and can only be regained by getting rid of sin and putting on "the righteousness which is of God." In going forth out of Paradise these original prodigals set their faces toward the far country of further sin and consequent suffering. They had contracted a tendency which was destined to ripen into inevitable indulgence. "Sow an act, and you reap a habit; sow a habit, and you reap a character; sow a character, and you reap a destiny." Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. The law is automatic. The Decalogue does not wait for Sinai or the tables of stone; it is written in the constitution of man, interwoven with

his nerve and sinew. So the exiles went forth to sin and suffering. The keeping of the garden had been a pleasure; but thenceforth the thorn-encumbered ground was to yield its fruits only in "the sweat of the face." Work was to become drudgery; being hampered by worry, which is the antithesis of faith. The first of weary pilgrims go forth into the world of industry as "brothers of the ox." They hide their faces, their backs are bent under the burden. There will be blood flowing and hearts breaking before they are through with it.

Sixth, Then follows the transmission of sin. Did I say "before they are through with it"? Aye; this is the misery of the Fall: "no man liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself." These exiles will have children; and, because the fathers have eaten sour grapes, the children's teeth will be set on edge. Thus it is written in science, as well as in Scripture and the New England Primer:

"In Adam's fall
We sinnèd all."

But you say that you do not believe in the doctrine of Original Sin! My friend, you are half a century behind the age! No student of science nowadays denies Original Sin; only it is called by a different name, "heredity." There is no denying the sight of one's eyes. The evidence is on every hand. You may raise the question of justice, but the universal fact is indisputable. All "children look like their fathers."

Seventh, Then death. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Here Scripture and science agree. The

foreign factor which has gotten into your Corliss engine has produced friction; and unless you can make an end of that friction, it will bring your machine to inevitable ruin. But what shall make an end of sin? The moral organism is under momentum; the disturbing factor works with accelerating force; how will you stop it? In time or in eternity, how will you stop it?

III. *We have here, moreover, a suggestion as to the Origin of Hope.*

For, notwithstanding the shame of these fugitives from Eden, there is a singular light on their faces. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast." The fable of Pandora's Box is true. Go where you will, the world over, you will find men dreaming of deliverance. They cannot believe that the God who created them will leave them to despair. But where is the ground of this universal hope? There is absolutely nothing in unaided reason to account for it.

> "Life without hope draws nectar in a sieve,
> And hope without an object cannot live."

What is its object? Ask science and you will get no answer. There is nothing more unaccountable to human wisdom than this universal light upon the face of man. All that science can say is, "Cause must be followed by effect. Sin means suffering until sin shall end. The sowing and the reaping must go on. There is no ground for hope; it is as baseless as the fabric of a dream."

But here again the Book of Origins comes to the help of science. It speaks of the protevangel which

was uttered in Paradise: "The Seed of Woman shall bruise the serpent's head." No sooner had sin entered into the world than its remedy was announced. Christ was coming; the Christ whose atoning blood should cleanse from sin. No sooner had the exiles passed through the gates of Paradise than they reared an altar and laid a slain lamb upon it. And altars began to multiply, until the hilltops of the world were crowned with them. And over every altar the blood was flowing. What did it mean? Can the blood of lambs or of bullocks cleanse from sin? Nay; never was man so foolish as to believe that. The light of the protevangel shines on the face of the man beside the altar; and in his sacrifice he sets forth, however dimly and vaguely, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

In the strength of that protevangel our first parents went out of the Garden to meet the dangers and vicissitudes of life. The promise given to them was the beginning of an unbroken series of prophecies which runs through the Scriptures of the Old Testament like a golden chain. This was "the Hope of Israel." This is the Hope of Humanity. *Spes unica!* It is the Christ, whose blood shall cleanse from sin.

JOURNEY II

IN WHICH CAIN AND HIS FOLLOWERS, WITH ALL THEIR BELONGINGS, MIGRATE TO THE LAND OF NOD

To the east of the Garden of Eden lay the land where our first parents dwelt after their expulsion. Its name, "The Land of Eden," suggests the memory of past happiness. There, for some hundreds of years, they remained and worked out their destiny, "multiplying and replenishing the earth."

The sword-like cloud of infolding fire with the two cherubim continued to guard the entrance of Paradise. It was probably not without reason that the rabbis identified this cloud with the Shekinah, or "most excellent glory," which was the visible token of the divine Presence; by which, as "a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night," the Children of Israel were guided through the wilderness, and which subsequently hovered above the Ark of the Covenant, where God had promised to speak to his people: "from between the wings of the cherubim."

To our first parents and their children of succeeding generations this cloud was a perpetual testimony of the abiding Presence. The first altar was built under its shadow; and there, in the original sanctuary, the simple prototype of the temple of Solomon, "men began to call upon the name of the Lord." There they cherished the protevangel, the sustaining hope of the

coming Christ, and knew that Jehovah was still their God.

In course of time the race divided itself into the two lines of Seth and Cain. The former was destined to be the channel for the transmission of the Messianic hope, while the latter was to deviate further and further from truth and righteousness. For some centuries the two lines dwelt together; and then "Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod."

So simply is chronicled *the first of the great migrations* which occupy so important a place in history. Out of this movement were to flow issues that should affect the welfare of the coming ages.

The man took with him his wife and children, and descendants, a great company like-minded with himself. His steps were turned eastward toward an unexplored country or wilderness known as "the land of Nod." And there he builded a city. In one of Macaulay's poems this city is described as a magnificent place:

"From all its threescore gates the light
Of gold and steel afar was thrown;
Two hundred cubits rose in height
The outer wall of polished stone.
On the top was ample space
For a gallant chariot race:
Near either parapet a bed
Of the richest mold was spread,
Where, amidst flowers of every scent and hue,
Rich orange trees and palms and giant cedars grew."

In this metropolis sat the ruler Cain, surrounded by the splendors of an Oriental court.

"With naked swords and shields of gold
Stood the seven princes of the tribes of Nod;
Upon an ermine carpet lay
Two tiger cubs in furious play
Beneath the emerald throne, where sat the signed of God."

It would be much nearer the truth, however, to conceive this first of cities as a collection of wattled huts, with a rude stockade about it.

As to the motive of Cain and his followers in moving away from the land of Eden, and exchanging the pursuits of pastoral and agricultural life for the more absorbing cares and ambitions of the madding crowd, we are not left in doubt. "He went out," the record says, "from the presence of the Lord." The cloud of "the most excellent glory" was a constant reminder to him of the ingrained sin which separated him from the Holy One. In resolving to depart from that Presence he was controlled by the same impulse which recently moved a burglar to turn the picture "Ecce Homo" with its face to the wall, that he might pursue his evil calling with less scruple or compunction of conscience; "thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

And he desired also to escape from the embarrassing presence of his religious kinsmen of the line of Seth. The proverb, "Birds of a feather flock together," lies back of all the historic migrations. "Like seeks like," and the righteous are ever a reproach to the evil-minded. It was for this reason that Professor Webster, while awaiting his trial for murder, asked the warden of the prison to keep the corridor clear of visitors, because, as he said, "Every man who looks in at my barred window calls to me, 'O thou bloody man!'"

And, further, in the segregation of city life he doubtless hoped for greater freedom in the pursuit of his ambitious schemes. The name of the city, "Enoch," means "consecrated." The place was consecrated to the spirit of Cain. The spirit of Cain is selfishness. It leaves out all due consideration of God and of human rights. The legend over the gateway of the city was, *"Am I my brother's keeper?"*

It would appear that Cain the fratricide was, with all his sins, a mighty man and a mighty leader of men. The building of the city would naturally furnish an outlet for his restless energies. He would be free to carry out, unhampered by vain scruples, his self-seeking enterprises. So runs the story of ambition through all the ages.

In this original movement of Cain and his followers from the quiet country life to the activity of the city we find an anticipation of the cityward drift which is all the while going on. Sallust lamented that the young men of his time were leaving their pleasant homes beyond the Alban Hills and seeking the smoky atmosphere of Rome. "There are so many voices" in nature; but the hum of city life is more alluring than the murmur of brooks or the singing of birds. In the schools of our boyhood we gravely debated the question, "Which is preferable: country or city life?" and the decision hinged upon the fact that "God made the country, while man made the town"; but in due time we said farewell to the farm or the village, and, like Franklin with all his worldly belongings over his shoulder, came trudging to town.

And why not? The city is the center of life. *Col-*

luvies gentium. The hopes and the purposes of the nations are here. The throb of the crowded streets is the beating of the universal heart.

It is an inspiring sight to see the throng each morning making its way from the steam-cars and ferry-boats, the subway and the elevated trains, to the centers of our metropolitan life. These are the masters of the world's prosperity; brave men, earnest and ambitious, not contented with mediocrity, ready to face danger and responsibility, if only they may "get on in the world." God bless them and give them success!

But let them take heed. As they enter the gates of the city let them lift their eyes and read their temptation in the legend, "Am I my brother's keeper?" For as the city stands for congested life, so its besetting sin is selfishness. Here dwells the spirit of Cain. Here do congregate those who flee from the presence of the Lord and from the humanities that make us brethren to our fellow men.

The spirit of Cain is all too manifest in our industrial life. It is a singular fact that the early developments of secular enterprise and improvement seem to have been confined to the line of Cain. In the line of Seth we find no mention of any invention in art or handicraft until the building of the ark. The names of the Cainite line, such as Enoch, Jared, "the swift one," Lamech, "the striker," are eloquent of eager and ambitious purpose. And here is Tubal-Cain, the maker of arms and implements. The anvils in the city of Enoch ring with industry. So far, so good; but this goes on, alas! without reverence toward God or regard for the rights of men.

The selfishness of industrial enterprise is represented in the word "competition"; and competition in the city of Enoch, or in any other city where God and humanity are left out of the reckoning, means success by the pushing aside of the other man. I profit by his loss; I advance by thrusting him out of my way.

To seek wealth is a legitimate pursuit. There is an honest penny which it behooves every man to get. But there are three pennies in circulation which blister the hands and shrivel the soul of a man:

One is the stolen penny. The thief filches it from his neighbor's pocket; the gambler gets it on the green baize field. It is a stolen penny however it be gotten, unless it be earned by the sweat of one's face.

Another is the tainted penny; which is gotten by fraud, overreaching, sharp bargaining or somehow at the expense of the other man. It bears the image and superscription of Cain, with the legend, "Am I my brother's keeper?" There is a sense in which all currency is "tainted," in that it has passed through hands defiled. But the determining question is not, How was it handled before it came to you? but How did you get it? Not how did Mr. Rockefeller acquire it? but How did the American Board get it? Not how did your employer gather it in? but, Did you come by it honestly? Each for himself must settle that.

And the third is the rusted penny; that which has been hoarded when it should have been spent; that which is corroded in the vault when it should have been going about doing good. This is the penny which a man lays away when it is needed for the betterment of others and when it is called for, as a fund in trust,

to be used in the great enterprises of the kingdom of God.

The man who, while ambitious to make his way, would live amid the temptations of city life, must give heed to fair play. Let him avoid impiety on the one hand and selfishness on the other. Let him put his conscience into his secular pursuit. Let him beware of pushing another down that he may stand up.

If Christ were to come to New York and preach the Golden Rule, would he be heard, think you, or would his voice be drowned in the roar of traffic and by the louder voices of the horse-leech's daughters, "Give! give!" Yet that rule, "Do as ye would be done by," is destined to solve all industrial problems, determine the just relations between labor and capital and ultimately bring in the Golden Age.

The spirit of Cain is manifest, also, in the social life of the city. And here we observe again that the early developments in culture were along the line of Cain. It was his grandson Jubal who invented the harp and organ. The liberal arts, as well as the achievements of constructive genius, seem to have had their center in the City of Enoch.

And with what result? A godless culture, a civilization without humanity, always comes to naught. The oldest scrap of poetry in literature is the song of Lamech, who, in returning from a marauding expedition, sang: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice! Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech! For I have slain a man for wounding me and a young man for bruising me. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold." Here in a

single verse we have a celebration of the two consummate vices of a godless civilization, to wit, war and polygamy; the basest violations of social and domestic life. And this was the consummation of culture in the Cainite city of Enoch.

It is a true saying, "History repeats itself." The Golden Age of Greece was that in which vice was most triumphant. A due regard for God and humanity lays emphasis on duties rather than on rights, on benevolence rather than on personal gain. Arts, science, inventions, mechanical skill; Cain and his townsmen had them all!

The same spirit of selfishness struggles for mastery in the political life of the city. No doubt this city of Enoch had its laws, its councils, and its political corruptions. The "wide-open policy" was prevalent there. Graft and bribery doubtless had their way. God was not in the Constitution nor in the lives of the people. The magistrates were in collusion with lawbreakers; and if there was any remonstrance, the answer was, "What do you propose to do about it?"

All this sounds like recent history. One is reminded of what Rudyard Kipling said of New York, "It is a long, narrow hog-trough, where each struggles for his own, and the people have occasional paroxysms of virtue." We resent that imputation, yet cannot deny that there is a measure of truth in it. We cannot be blind to common violations of law and morality, which are winked at by the powers that be. Is there a law against "dives"? Why, then, are our dens of iniquity unsuppressed? Is there a law looking to the observ-

ance of the Sabbath? Why, then, are the theaters wide open every Sabbath night? Is there a civil service law? Why, then, are notoriously evil appointments made and scandalously corrupt men kept in office? And all the while it is an open secret that the good people of this city are in a great majority! Alas, they are taken up in the lips of talkers and controlled by demagogic appeals to expediency as against truth and righteousness. On Election Day there are many of these excellent people who make the cross in the circle under the legend of Cain; and it is by the corrupt use of the balance of power in their hands that the city is controlled in the interest of Cain.

The word of the Master is, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and render unto God the things that are God's." Put that into the current phrase of present duty and it would read, "Vote for lawmakers who will make statutes and ordinances consistent with the divine law. Vote for magistrates who, independent of bonds and pledges, will fearlessly enforce law. Vote for the candidate who regards himself as his brother's keeper and his office as a sacred trust; who reveres God and purposes to serve his fellow men."

Once more, the spirit of selfishness is obvious in much of the ecclesiastical life of the city. Were there shrines or sanctuaries in the city of Enoch? No doubt. A community cannot live without religious institutions. But they are dedicated to false gods. And usually those gods are worshiped with the most elaborate rites and ceremonies. The citizens of Enoch had fled from the presence of the Lord, but they could not

be atheists. There are no atheists. All tribes and peoples have their mosques and temples. But the Scotch proverb is true, "A man may be anear the kirk an' still afar frae God."

It was into the city's sanctuary that Jesus entered with his scourge of small cords. It was to the religious leaders of Jerusalem that he said, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, maskwearers! Ye make long prayers at the corners of the streets and devour widows' houses!" Would it seem like an intrusion if this Carpenter in homespun were suddenly to appear in our Churches with an announcement of his gospel of piety and humanity? There was nothing in the world more hateful to him than selfishness masquerading in canonicals. It is written, "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and to keep one's self unspotted from the world." Can we test our forms of worship by that touchstone?

This is not to say that there are not multitudes of devout people in our city Churches; or that the Church itself is not a divine institution, or that every Christian ought not to be a member of it. But there is need of constant vigilance lest the weightier matters of the divine law give way to superficial profession and spiritual pride.

The bitter cry of the outcast is heard amid the confused noises of the city. The Church cannot ignore its responsibility toward the lapsed masses. To cry "Lord, Lord!" and reach forth no helping hand is not to follow in his steps. The love of God and the love of souls must take possession of us. Christ came into

the world to seek and save the lost; and he said, "As the Father hath sent me, so I send you."

Up and down our streets walks the Master, pausing in the market-place to cry, "Ho, every one that thirsteth; come ye!" And the city is full of people who need him. They jostle each other in their pursuit of selfish gain and pleasure. There are those among them who, were there but a momentary lull in the unceasing noises, might hear again the sacred terms in which they made the covenant of their youth. They are lost in the city; caught up in the swirl of its sordid pursuits and forgetful of the calls of God and humanity. O men in the City of Enoch, stop and think! Take time to ponder on truth and righteousness. No man liveth unto himself! Listen to the voices. Hear the cry of perishing men. Live no longer for self alone, but for the glory of God and the good of your fellow men.

JOURNEY III

IN WHICH THE THREE SONS OF NOAH SEPARATE AND GO FORTH TO OVERSPREAD THE EARTH

If one of the planets were to swing out of its orbit, what hope of restoration would there be? The fall of man was a departure from the law of his being; and the inevitable sequence, barring divine interposition, was an ever-increasing departure from truth and righteousness.

The first five chapters of the book of Genesis cover a period of about fifteen hundred years, during which the race was under a moral momentum which carried it from bad to worse. The climacteric point of decadence is indicated in this wise: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth; and it grieved him at his heart."

The next three chapters of the Book are devoted to the remedy or corrective. Nothing would answer but a clean sweep and a fresh start. This is the meaning of the Flood. "The fountains of the deep were broken up and the windows of heaven were opened; and the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered; and the ark went upon the face of the wa-

ters." In that ark, committed to a boundless sea amid a scene of universal desolation, were Noah and his wife, with his three sons and their wives. In those eight persons were involved the future destinies of the race.

"And in the seventh month on the seventeenth day of the month the ark rested on Ararat." The fateful voyage was over. And God spake unto Noah, saying, "Go forth from the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee." And they builded an altar unto the Lord and offered thereon a sacrifice, which, like every burnt offering, had in it the potential prophecy of the coming Lamb of God.

As the suppliants lifted their eyes from the altar they beheld the Bow of Promise. And God said, "I will set my bow in the clouds; and it shall be for a token of the Covenant which I have established between me and all flesh that is upon the earth." The altar was the expression of human need; and the Bow of Promise, the visible symbol of providence and grace, was God's response to man's cry. It was as if he said, "I will never leave thee; I will never—no, never—no, never forsake thee!"

In the vicinity of Ararat the family of Noah settled down to replenish the earth. And then for another period of a hundred and forty years or thereabouts, the race repeated its downward career, going deeper and deeper into sin, until the climax was reached in the Vale of Shinar, where they said, "Go to, let us build a city and a tower whose top shall point upward like a finger defiant of God!" And the Lord said, "Go to, let us go down and there confound them!" Then the

Dispersion; as it is written, "From thence did he scatter them abroad upon the face of the earth."

Here we observe the second of those great migrations which have furnished the salient points in human history. The three sons of Noah, with their followers, went their several ways to work out their destiny. It is an apologue of life. For thus men ever stand at the parting of the ways, cast the horoscope of fortune, and set forth into the unknown. It is for them to say, under God, what their future shall be.

Our proposition is this: *Life is what we make it.*

Let it be observed that *at the outset the three brothers had a fair start and an equal chance.*

They were handicapped alike by sin.

As each possessed the sovereign power of choice, so each was capable of going wrong. And it was a moral certainty that they would do it. This is the one thing that can be prognosticated of every man. The mothers of the earth all sit with their children in their arms, hoping, wondering, and vainly striving to pierce the future; but one thing is morally sure, when those children come to years of discretion they will all, without exception, turn aside into the evil way.

The three brothers were alike, also, in their parental inheritance.

We know nothing of their mother; but of their father it is said, "He was a preacher of righteousness, and a just man who walked with God." His name is recorded in the Roll-call of Heroes in the Eleventh of Hebrews as one who "became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." He was by no means, however, a perfect man, being the victim of at least one

besetting sin, as it is written, "He planted a vineyard; and he drank of the wine and was drunken." It was inevitable that his sins, whatever they were, should be transmitted to his children after him. Heredity is an indisputable fact; but it affords no excuse for indulgence in sin. We are all heirs of our forbears, and there is no great difference. Some inherit the grosser vices, such as drunkenness and licentiousness, which leave their visible scars; while others are heirs to ancestral pride, covetousness, and like "respectable" vices, which do not exclude them from polite society. The drunkard who reels along the street is no more really handicapped by his patrimony of alcoholism, than is the millionaire's son who wears his father's bonds of avarice; and to each belongs the individual power, with God's help, to resist heredity and be his own man.

And the three brothers were alike subject to the evil constraints of environment.

It was not a matter of supreme importance which way they turned their several steps; for the power of evil "goeth up and down through the whole earth." There are invalids who spend their time in nothing else but in seeking a "favorable climate" in Florida or in the Adirondacks or across the sea. But the disease of sin knows no curative climate. Are the denizens of the city exposed to special temptations? So are those of the villages and farmers' boys at the crossroads. Will you keep your son from college because temptations there await him? He must meet temptation at home or wherever he may be; and, in any case, must fight his way to character. "The Best of men that e'er

wore flesh about him" grew up in the notorious town of Nazareth.

But there is another side to this. We have seen how the three sons of Noah were equally handicapped; let us now observe some of the advantages which they shared equally, and by which they were encouraged to quit themselves like men.

To begin with, *each had a free and sovereign will of his own.*

Any sin which they might commit would be by the power of choice. The same is true of other men. If any of us will look back over his life, he must perceive that he has never committed a single sin of which he is not bound to say, "I chose to do it." In this sense every man is the architect of his own fortune; and, by the same token, he must bear his burden of responsibility. It is as Cæsar said: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars but in ourselves, that we are underlings."

And, further, *each of these brothers had a conscience of his own;* a voice within, by which he was enabled to discern "betwixt the worse and better reason."

All men, as Paul says, have "the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts, the meanwhile, accusing or else excusing one another." This is the universal monitor which God has given to guide us, like the North Star which guides all mariners upon the open sea.

And, further and better still, *the three brothers had alike the promise of divine help.*

They were "children of the covenant"; the bow of promise was over them. It was the symbol of the

protevangel, "the Hope of Israel," the presage of the coming Christ, in whom the divine arm was to be made bare to sustain and deliver them. What more could they ask?

Now as to the sequel. If we were arguing in the province of ethnological science, it would be in order, at this point, to refer to the tenth chapter of Genesis, a dry genealogical table, which furnishes the basis of all correct history as to the solidarity of the race. But this is aside from our purpose, which is to emphasize the practical outcome of the separation of these brothers, as bearing upon the life and character of men.

Ham with his household turned to the South, and became the father of the black races. The one incident which is related of him shows that he made a bad beginning, in a sin of filial irreverence and sensuality. The word which was spoken, "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be," was simply the divine *imprimatur* put upon the natural law, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." It is a singular comment upon the veracity of the sacred narrative that the sin of Ham, as witnessed in the black races of Egypt, of Ethiopia, and of the negroes of our Southern States, is a racial sin; and, also, that its punishment has been racial; since the black race has ever furnished the bond-slaves of the earth; as God said, "A servant of servants shall he be."

Shem was the father of the Hebrews. He set out with a great promise, "Blessed be the Lord God of Shem!" The Jews were the chosen people; chosen to a splendid privilege and to a corresponding responsi-

bility. To them was entrusted the special care of the oracles, the transmission of the worship of the true God, and the Messianic hope. In this God showed himself to be "the God of Shem." Paul says, "What advantage hath the Jew? Much every way; first of all, that they were entrusted with the oracles of God." And this is explained by Christ himself where he says, "Salvation is of the Jews." The hope of the coming Christ, who was symbolically set forth in the Bow of Promise, was known as "the Hope of Israel."

But, alas! these people were untrue to their privilege. For twenty centuries they cherished the hope of Messiah only to renounce it at the supreme moment when their fidelity was put to the crucial test. Their Messiah "came unto his own and his own received him not." He sat on the slope of Olivet and wept over their blind obduracy: "O Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered you as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! And now, behold, your house is left unto you desolate!" A few days later the children of Shem followed the Christ, their Messiah for whom they had looked so long, up the slopes of Golgotha, crying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" The deed was done, and their house was left unto them desolate. In the succeeding centuries they have remained a separated people; the miracle of history; a people as distinct from other peoples as the Gulf Stream flowing through the sea. And O, the desolation of the house of Shem! A people commanding the world's wealth and standing at the forefront of its intellectual history, yet all the while exposed to unspeakable wrongs and persecutions! To-

day the unburied dead of the house of Shem are lying in the streets of Kishineff. God of Shem, when shall thy chosen people behold their Christ? When shall they return to the covenant that was set forth in the Bow of Promise? When shall they sit under the luminous shadow of the cross? Pity thine own people and anoint their eyes with eyesalve that they may see!

Japheth and his household turned to the North, taking with them a promise which was destined to be interpreted in the light of coming events: "God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Centuries must pass before the world should see that promise fulfilled in the overthrow of Jerusalem by the Romans, and still more clearly in the opening up of the Gentile world to the Gospel. For the Apostle Paul and others who gave the Glad Tidings to Europe were the seed of Shem, and Europe was peopled by the seed of Japheth.

A few years after the crucifixion, Paul and Barnabas, both Jews, were preaching in the synagogue at Antioch, where for a considerable time they had been vainly pressing the Messianic claims of Jesus upon their countrymen. In that synagogue, that day, were spoken words which marked it as one of the pivotal days of history. Paul said to his Jewish audience: "It was necessary that the word of God should be first spoken unto you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles! For so hath the Lord commanded, saying, I have set thee to be a light unto the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation even unto the ends of the earth."

Thus the desolated house of the children of Shem was opened up to the children of Japheth. The Hope of Israel which had been renounced was to become a universal hope. To this fact all subsequent history bears testimony. "Westward the course of empire takes its way." The Romans, the Teutons, the Angles, and the Saxons have been the conquering peoples of the earth. Japhetic supremacy is an accomplished fact. Christian civilization is a synonym for light, liberty, and enterprise. The Christian Church is bearing salvation unto the ends of the earth. Japheth dwells in the tents of Shem.

Now as to the practical lesson. *Life is what we make it.* The three brothers are ever going forth to work out their destiny, each for himself, under the bow of promise.

Are they handicapped? Yes, like Ham and Shem and Japheth. All alike are hampered and crippled by sin. All alike must struggle against heredity and environment, the corrupted currents of their ancestral blood, and the adverse circumstances of life. But "the mark of true greatness," as Macaulay says, "is to prove one's self superior to his environment and the master of his conditions."

Is this possible? Aye, by divine grace. For every man is the equal of his fellow in this, that his will, his conscience, and the Bow of Promise can make him more than conqueror.

In the time of Pericles there was a law in Greece that only freemen should devote themselves to art. A slave named Creon, who worshiped beauty, wrought in a secret place upon a statue of Apollo, while his sister

Cleone toiled for food. The statue was placed in the annual exhibit at Athens, among the works of the great masters. The judges approved its excellence; but Cleone, refusing to betray her brother, was sentenced to torture. At this point Creon spoke: "O Pericles! I am the guilty one! The statue was mine, and I am Creon, a slave!" The judges would have condemned him to the dungeon; but Pericles himself interposed, saying, "There is a law higher than all Greek statutes, that he who immortalizes beauty deserves to live and labor under the blessing of the gods." Whereupon the crown of olives was accorded to Creon. Aye, there is a law above all human statutes, that he who conquers adverse conditions, vindicates his right to live and to wear the crown of usefulness. God loves the man

> "Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
> And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
> And breasts the blows of circumstance,
> And grapples with his evil star."

The Bow of Promise is God's overture of help. It speaks of Christ, who is God's Arm stretched out to struggling men. And here is the secret of success. *Nil desperandum, Christo sub Duce!* We cannot fail if we lean on him. "Will, God, and I can." The Promise beckons to all earnest souls. The last word of John Wesley is the word for us, "The best of all is Immanuel, God with us!"

JOURNEY IV

IN WHICH ABRAHAM AND HIS HOUSEHOLD TAKE THEIR DEPARTURE TO AN UNKNOWN COUNTRY

THE people of the Chaldean town of Ur had assembled to witness the departure of one of their townsmen on a strange journey. It must have seemed to them "a fool's errand"; for this man, a well-to-do citizen, seventy-five years of age, was going forth "to a country that he knew not." He was taking his wife, a beautiful woman ten years younger than himself, a retinue of men-servants and maid-servants, camels and asses laden with household gear, with his numerous flocks and herds. He was accompanied also by his old father, Terah, and an orphaned nephew, who was destined to be heard from later on.

The time of parting had come. Friends and kinsfolk were sobbing on each others' necks. The word was given and the caravan moved out towards the West. The people stood at the gateway, straining their eyes, until naught could be seen but a dust-cloud on the distant horizon. Farewell!

How little they knew that this departure was destined to be one of the pivotal points of history! In the course of time there would be Pharaohs and Cæsars going forth with multitudinous armies, amid the blare of trumpets and waving of banners, to the conquest of nations; but none of these adventures would be com-

parable in importance with the simple march of yonder clan.

This movement was remarkable, in the first place, *because it was to stand as one of the early factors in the development of the race.*

No student of ethnological science can afford to ignore it. The replenishing of the earth has been effected by centrifugal migrations from common centers. The first of these, of permanent record, was when Cain went forth with his following from the land of Eden to the land of Nod. The second was when the three sons of Noah set out, a hundred and forty years after the Flood, to make their respective settlements. And the third was this departure of Abraham and his clan "unto a place which he should afterward receive for an inheritance," and from which he was destined to influence the history of succeeding ages.

The movement was remarkable, in the second place, *because it was divinely ordered and controlled.*

The man in command was distinctly God's man. He set forth at the behest of God: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a country that I shall show thee."

At the outset he heard the Voice, and in all his long itinerary he was obedient to it. He journeyed until he came to Haran, where the Voice bade him tarry. There his father, Terah, died and was buried. At the command of the Voice he thence moved on to Shechem, where God renewed his covenant with him, showing him the stars of heaven and saying, "So shall thy seed be!" Thence he turned his steps to Egypt, because "the famine was grievous in the land." It

would appear that, in this instance, he did not wait upon the Voice; and the result was sin and sorrow. In due time, he returned from Egypt to the highlands and pitched his tent near Beth-el, "the place of the altar." Here his nephew, Lot, parted company with him, preferring to settle in the well-watered plains of Jordan. The Voice spoke again, and Abraham removed to Mamre, where he pitched his tent under the oak. His following had so increased that he could now go forth to war, as a feudal lord, with three hundred and eighteen retainers. Thence he journeyed to the South Country and sojourned in Gerar, where the child of promise was born to him and the covenant was again renewed, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." And thence to Beersheba, where Sarah, his princess, died; and, having no foot of ground in possession, he must needs ask a burial-place of the children of Heth. Here the patriarch dwelt until "he died and was gathered unto his people, an old man and full of years," finding at last a resting-place in "the better country, even an heavenly, and in the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

In all this life-long journey he waited upon the Voice. Again and again it is written, "And the Lord spake unto him, saying." Was this a singular experience, or does the Lord still speak to men? It would appear that he spake audibly in those days, when, as yet, there were no Oracles. He still speaks no less really, if less audibly, to those who are willing to hear him.

The Voice is heard in nature; as it is written,

"There are so many voices and none of them is without signification." He that hath ears to hear, let him hear! To Mozart the brooks and forests and mountains seemed ever to be saying, "Turn me into music." But there are those who hear no voice within the voices of flowing brooks and singing birds.

God speaks in history, also. "Can ye not discern the signs of the times?" Is there no message in the turmoil and confusion of the nations? The clang of steel and smoke of battle, is that all? Shall we be as blind to the logic of events as was Ahimaaz, who ran from the battle in the wood of Ephraim to report, "I saw a tumult; but I knew not what it was"?

God speaks from the pages of Holy Writ. "Search the Scriptures," said the great Teacher, "for in them ye think ye have eternal life and these are they which testify of me." The Voice is here; articulate as the fabled voice of the vocal Memnon was thought to be. But the message is for him only who can read between the lines.

God has "spoken unto us," moreover and most clearly, "in these last days by his Son," who is ever saying, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

All depends upon our attitude. Abraham kept himself in a responsive posture. In the midst of a community of nature-worshipers he was an earnest truth-seeker, and that although his father, Terah, if the Jewish tradition is correct, "was a maker of idols and served other gods."

If one would hear the Voice he must bow as Elijah did on Horeb, until the wind and the earthquake and

the fire sweep by; then, with his face between his knees, he shall hear "the still small Voice." This is the promise to every reverent soul: "Thou shalt hear a Voice behind thee, saying, This is the way: walk ye in it."

The migration of Abraham was important, in the third place, *because of the far-reaching issues that flowed out of it.*

As he moved upward along the banks of the Euphrates, halting or journeying at the behest of the Voice, within the fluttering curtains of his tent were the destinies of the future Church of God.

He was the father of the Jewish Church. When in his journeyings he came to the headwaters of the Jordan and crossed over, he became the *ibri,* the Hebrew, literally, the "over man."

The "call" to this office was given him because he was in the line of Shem, on whom the blessing had been pronounced, "Jehovah is the God of Shem." Its necessity was due to the fact that the Shemitic race was declining from the worship of the true God. A family must be selected over whom God should exercise a peculiar supervision, preserving the Messianic promise which was the nucleus of the future Oracles, and transmitting it to future generations. The call was to a peculiar privilege, but also to a responsibility commensurate with it. It was specifically a call to save the embers of religion and preserve the hope of the coming Christ, who was to deliver the world from sin.

It is not enough to say that Abraham was the father of the Jewish Church; he was the father of the universal Church of God. The Church is not two, but one

in two Economies which are separated by the Cross. In that supreme event all the hopes and prophecies of the Old Economy converged, as tributaries pour themselves into a reservoir; and from it all the subsequent hopes and aspirations and splendid conquests of the New Economy have flowed forth. The Christian Church bears to Judaism the same relation that the flower bears to the bud. The Old Economy was like a field wherein the seed-corn awaits the fullness of time; the New Economy is the same field ripe and ready for the sickle.

The call of Abraham made him the father of a "separated" people; separated to the definite task of keeping and transmitting the life-giving truth. The call of the Christian Church is the very same. The word *ekklesia* means "called out." If the followers of Christ, now numbering some hundreds of millions, did but realize that they are individually and collectively "called out" of the world to keep the Messianic hope and preach it to the uttermost parts of the earth, the tabernacle of God would soon come down among men.

The departure of Abraham and his clan was remarkable, in the fourth place, *because it was a blind movement.*

There are three singular expressions which characterize it:

(1) "Not knowing";—"He went out not knowing whither he went." The five physical senses, which are regarded by the average man as the main sources of knowledge, could give him no information as to where his pilgrimage would end.

(2) "As seeing the invisible." This is the word

used of Moses when he turned his back on the treasures of Egypt. The paradox, "seeing the invisible," is solvable only by the man who follows the Voice. He perceives such verities as God, whom no man hath ever seen or can see with fleshly eyes; and Duty, which can only be apprehended by the man who hears the "Voice behind him"; and Destiny, which Christ alone determines, of whom it is written, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The stars spoke to Abraham of him in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. They prophesied to him of One who should save the world from sin; as Christ said, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."

(3) "By faith." Faith is the sixth sense, by which alone it is possible to perceive spiritual things. So far from being credulity, it is as far as possible removed from it. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It makes the invisible substantial, and founds a creed on valid evidence; on evidence which is *terra firma,* stronger than that of the physical senses, because it rests in the Voice of God.

And the journey of Abraham to the unknown country was remarkable, finally, *as a parable or similitude of life.*

He was the father of all pilgrims who count themselves not denizens of this world, but travelers going through it, "looking for a better country, even an heavenly."

"I'm a pilgrim and I'm a stranger;
I can tarry, I can tarry but a night."

The man who thinks is bound to conclude that he belongs to two worlds. He may ask as he will, "If a man die shall he live again?" there is a spirit within him which responds, "I shall live and not die!" There is a life beyond. Death, so far from ending all, begins all.

And one who realizes this will be unmoved by the current sneer at "other-worldliness." He solves the problem of relative values. The great disparity between the life here and the life beyond is ever before him. The ratio is that of a line, whereof the one part is as an handbreath and the other goes on forever. The significance of death is due only to the fact that it formulates and crystallizes character, thus determining condition in the life beyond. This is the truth of the legend on the dial, *Omnia vulnerant, ultima necant,* which may be liberally rendered, "There are many things which count, but it is the last that fixes all." Thus runs the proverb, "In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be."

Hence the importance of living well the life that is here and now. For we can live it only once. There is no doubling on our tracks. We have never been this way before, and we shall never come this way again. Wherefore it behooves us to make the most of it. The maxim, "While we live, let us live" is a wise one if rightly interpreted; that is, let us so invest our time, our energies of body and soul, our privileges and opportunities, as to make them fit us for an Eternity of happy usefulness.

This is the secret of a successful life: To walk by faith as seeing the invisible, hearing the Voice, watching the stars of promise, building our altars and passing on. To this end the Oracles are given, that we may know how to live. And to this end God hath spoken unto us by his Son in these last days. He is the *Logos,* the Voice of God, articulated in flesh, that men may hear and live through him.

"So on I go, not knowing,
I would not if I might;
I'd rather walk in the dark with God
Than walk alone in the light;
I'd rather go by faith with Him
Than go alone by sight."

JOURNEY V

IN WHICH ISAAC, BEARING THE WOOD FOR THE SACRIFICE, CLIMBS UP INTO THE MOUNT OF GOD

In the home at Beersheba, by the seven wells, Abraham had settled down to rest. He had been a pilgrim and a sojourner since the day when he left Ur of the Chaldees at the command, "Go forth unto a country that I shall show you." How grateful, at last, to sit with his happy household under his own vine and fig-tree!

The family was knit together in the fellowship of faith. The head of the household was by eminence "The Father of the Faithful" and "The Friend of God." His wife, Sarah, though a weak woman in many ways, has also been counted worthy of a place in the roll-call of heroes, "because she judged him faithful who had promised." It is true her faith had broken down once; when an angel appeared at the doorway of the tent in Mamre and said to Abraham, "Lo, Sarah thy wife shall bear a son." A sound of incredulous laughter from within the tent told that Sarah had overheard it. The child of promise was now in the home at Beersheba; Isaac, "son of laughter." How they loved him; the child of their old age, in whom centered the promise of the covenant, "As the stars of heaven, so shall thy seed be!"

A cloud now hung over this happy home. The Voice that Abraham had never disregarded had said, "Take thy son, thine only son Isaac, the son whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering!" The faith of the Father of the Faithful had now to be put to its ultimate test. It must go through the crucible that it might come forth as gold seven times tried.

O, the long, long night that followed! It would appear that not a word was spoken to Sarah, lest the heart of the fond mother might break. In solitude the patriarch faced his ordeal. He might ask of himself a thousand questions, but only one could weigh in his decision, "Was it really the Voice of God?" That settled, there was nothing left but to obey.

"And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and went into the place of which the Lord had told him." Here are volumes in a sentence. Not many tragedies are so briefly told.

It was a three days' journey from Beersheba to the heights of Jebus. Many a man had traveled those fifty miles afoot, but never one so wearily as this man. The gold-seeker traverses deserts and climbs mountains joyously to find his Ophir; but one will faint in going a mile with sorrow at the end of it.

It would appear that on the first day, as they skirted the edge of the wilderness, no word was spoken. The look on the father's face, perhaps, forbade all converse, betraying the fierce struggle within.

On the second day, as they climbed the foothills, the silence was broken: "My father, where is the lamb for

the burnt offering?" And Abraham said, "My son, God will provide himself a lamb."

On the third day at sunrise they came in sight of the mountain. A rabbinical legend says that it was marked by the Shekinah, the mysterious cloud of the divine Presence. It was the same cloud that had hung so darkly over the home at Beersheba. So they came to the appointed place; the altar was built, Isaac was bound and laid upon it, and Abraham stretched forth his hand to slay him.

We pause here to ask, why this must be? Had not the faith of Abraham been sufficiently tried before this? Not so. It remained to be seen whether he really believed in God, in a God who would and could interpose, even in the direst extremity, to help him. The faith which brought him to the summit of Moriah was to be rewarded with a vision which is explained in the name Jehovah-jireh; that is, "The Lord will provide."

The ultimate test of faith is here, *Do we believe in Providence?* In these days of free-lance theology we all hold to some sort of God; but the crucial question is, Do we believe in a God who can interpose to help us? This is the vision of faith. The proverb runs, "In the mountain of the Lord it shall be seen." This is what Abraham saw: Providence—a God who knew, who cared, who interposed to help him.

I. To see this is to find relief amid the common cares and perplexities of life.

The Law runs on this wise: "Summer and winter, seed-time and harvest shall not fail." The question is between that Law and the Miracle of the Loaves.

Suppose seed-time and harvest should fail, what then? If the hungry cry for bread, is there a prayer-answering God who will supply it? Is the miracle possible? For every answer to prayer is in the nature of a miracle, since it is a special providence.

The tendency of present thought is along the lines of Evolution; that is, the calm and uninterrupted working of natural laws. But the hungry and the naked are among us, and the law has not supplied their need. What now? Prayer and the miracle! To those who go about the streets with thin lips murmuring "food" and "raiment," the Great Teacher speaks: "Is it food that ye need? Consider the fowls of the air; they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Is it raiment that ye need? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" Here is comfort unspeakable for those who have no meal in the barrel nor oil in the cruse. This is what Faith sees in the Mount of Vision:

"It may not be your way,
It may not be my way,
And yet in his own way
The Lord will provide."

II. And here is strength, also, for such as are passing through the deeper troubles of life; who are moved

to cry, "All thy waves and billows are gone over me!"

The Law in this case is that which the Stoics formulated and the materialistic evolutionists of our time emphasize, namely, "What can't be cured must be endured." The question is between the operation of that Law and the proverb, "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." Is it true that God "is a help to the poor and to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, *when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall"?*

It was this problem which Job answered when, sitting amid the ruins of his prosperity, forsaken by his friends and tortured with physical pain, he cried, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!" This was the truth which God revealed to Daniel when, faithful in the teeth of danger, he said "My God hath sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me," to which the chronicler adds, "No manner of hurt was found upon him, because he believed in his God." And this was the vision which came to Paul after a life spent in perils oft by land and sea; a dim-eyed, pain-racked prisoner in chains, he found it possible to say, "I know him whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day!"

This truth of Providence is the last and crowning vision of faith. None but those who have climbed the mountain of sacrifice and built the altar of Jehovah-jireh there can sing:

"Pain's furnace heat within me quivers;
God's breath upon the fire does blow;
And all the heart within me shivers
And trembles in the fiery glow;
And yet I whisper 'As God will,'
And in his fiercest fires holds still."

III. The climax of this truth is realized in times of spiritual distress. For, when all is said, the deepest longing of the average man is a spiritual longing, which expresses itself on this wise, "What shall I do to be saved?"

The Law here is, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap," and, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." The question is between that Law and the Gospel, which is the highest expression of special Providence; its terms being, God can and does interpose to save a sinner from the shame, the bondage, and the penalty of sin.

The key to the vision in Mount Moriah is in the words of Christ: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad" (John 8: 56). The Gospel was what Abraham saw in the Mount of God. A man of like passions with other men, a conscious sinner having within himself a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and desiring to know, above all things, how God can be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly, he found his answer in a foregleam of the atonement; *he saw Christ afar off.*

In the outline of this narrative we behold a wonderful parallel to the Story of the Cross. As Abraham set out in the early morning with Isaac his son to go unto the mount of sacrifice, so did Christ come in the

fullness of time to become a whole burnt offering for sin.

It is written that in the three days' journey from Beersheba to Mount Moriah "They went both of them together." So went the Father and the Son together all the way to Calvary. It was not three days but thirty weary years of journeying toward the altar of sacrifice; and all the while Jesus could say, "I am not alone; the Father is with me."

In the grief that burdened the heart of Abraham we discern a faint figure of the Father's pain in yielding up his only-begotten Son. There are those who say, "God cannot suffer, because he hath neither body, parts nor passions." But who shall thus hang the plummet or lay the measuring line to the word "so" in the saying, "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son"? The message that came to Abraham was like a merciless beating upon his heart-strings: "Take now thy son—thine only son—Isaac, the son of laughter—thy son whom thou lovest—and offer him!" The night during which he pondered on that needs-be must be measured over against the eternity in which God contemplated the giving of his only Son. And there is a terrific suggestion of heroic grief in the fact that Abraham carried in one hand the knife and in the other the brazier. Inasmuch as there was no escape from the necessity laid upon him, it behooved him thus to face it.

And observe also the acquiescence of Isaac, who "bare the wood of the burnt offering." So Christ gave himself. During the years of his ministry he was under the shadow of the cross. His life's journey was

over Via Dolorosa. He knew what awaited him; he "set his face steadfastly" toward it.

The agony of the hour when the final revelation was made to Isaac is passed over in silence. It was on the third day when Abraham said to his servants, "Tarry ye here while I and the lad go yonder." Then somewhere as they climbed the mountain path, Abraham said (O, who shall tell the heart-breaking sorrow of it?), "My son, thou art the lamb for sacrifice! It must needs be!" So at the gateway of Gethsemane, Jesus said to his disciples, "Tarry ye here while I go yonder": and passing into the deeper shadows of the Garden he faced the full, final, overwhelming announcement of the necessity that was put upon him. He was not alone in that supreme hour; the Father was with him. All that was human in him cried out against the cup of purple death that was pressed to his lips, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this pass from me!" Then came the great, final surrender, "Thy will be done!" So he was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

But here the similitude breaks down. There is no perfect analogy to any of the great mysteries of faith: none for the Trinity; none for the Incarnation; none for the Atonement. The object-lesson on Mount Moriah was closed when Abraham stood with his uplifted knife. The Voice said, "Lay not thy hand upon the lad!" The ram caught in the thicket must needs be brought in to complete the figure of the sacrifice. On Calvary the uplifted hand was not stayed. Christ suffered on, despite the fact that his enemies were crying,

"If Thou be Christ, come down from the cross!" and that legions of angels were hovering there to rescue him. He suffered on until the Gospel found its consummation in a full Atonement, when with a loud voice he cried, "It is finished!"

This is the vision of Providence which Abraham saw. Not until a man perceives the full significance of the Atonement as a divine interposition in our behalf, does he know the real meaning of Providence. "In the mountain of the Lord it shall be seen!" What shall be seen? This, that the arm of the Lord is not "shortened that it cannot save." Here is the truth which so-called science calls "foolishness," because it is an apparent contravention of the uninterrupted processes of natural law. Yet just here is the very heart of the Gospel. As it is written, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his only-begotten Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us."

But who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? The arm of the Lord, thrust in to solve the question of insensate law *vs.* Providence, is Christ, himself the Incarnation of omnipotent grace; this is God's arm made bare in the Atonement of the cross. Abraham saw this afar off. To us, it is presented as an historic fact, accentuated by the story of nineteen centuries of Christian civilization. And still there are those who refuse to believe in Providence! "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, be-

fore whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?"

An old Jewish proverb runs, "The secret of Messiah is the secret of man." To see this vision in the mountain is to solve the problem of life. But this spiritual fact is spiritually discerned. He alone who has eyes of faith can see it.

JOURNEY VI

IN WHICH JACOB AND HIS FAMILY, NOT WITHOUT MISGIVINGS, DESCEND INTO EGYPT

We shall make no headway in the study of history unless, at the outset, we have an adequate conception of the divine plan. All things are working together toward a definite end; and that end is the deliverance of the world from sin. In the logic of passing events, this point grows clearer every day; as Tennyson sings,

> "Yet I doubt not through the ages one eternal purpose runs,
> And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

A man on his journey came to an archway on which was written, "The House of History"; and, the door being open, he saw one sitting at a loom, casting a shuttle to and fro. The fabric in the loom seemed to be all threads and thrums, because the man saw only the wrong side of it. This is the Parable:—The weaver is God; the flying shuttle is time; the fabric is a royal robe which the Weaver is making for his Son who is destined to reign from the river unto the ends of the earth.

We are to consider, now, the eventful life of Jacob as an arc in the great circle of that purpose, the pur-

pose which comprehends all history and has for its center the Messianic triumph in the Golden Age.

At the outset, observe the divine process in *the Making of a Man.*

God wanted a man; where should he find him? In a shepherd's hut at Lahai-roi there were two brothers, Jacob and Esau; one of whom was chosen. Why Jacob rather than Esau? The question must be addressed to God himself. Whether he answers is another matter: for, being sovereign, he reserves the right to be silent. If he speaks at all, it will probably be to say, "Be still and know that I am God!"

One thing is sure, Jacob was not chosen because of any personal merit. A sculptor who would make a statue begins by choosing a block of flawless marble; but no such choice is possible to God when he would make a man, since "all have sinned and there is no difference." He must make his masterpieces out of poor material or not at all.

In the character of Jacob there were two conspicuous faults. One was Avarice. His name means "the supplanter." He was a sharp bargainer, getting the better of his brother, his kinspeople and his fellow shepherds, and not above striving to make a hard bargain even with God. The other fault in his character was Cowardice. He was by nature a timid man; and this was disclosed and emphasized by the wraiths of his ill-doing that ever pursued him.

The task of making a man out of such common clay would seem to be a forlorn hope, were not this matter in the hands of God. He will put Jacob through a course of discipline that will develop him. In the proc-

ess there will be much of suffering, but the end will crown the work; for Jacob will ultimately find his place in the all-embracing plan of God.

The question, "Does God send trouble?" is the smallest question that was ever asked. God will send anything that may be needed in order to qualify a man for service. In the case of Jacob it will be like the polishing of the diamond, the hackling of flax, the harrowing of a field. The man will groan under his burden of affliction, but it will prove the making of him. For "as night to stars, woe lustre gives to man." He will be afflicted in his person, in his domestic relations, in his dealings with friends and neighbors; pain, sorrow, and weariness will be his portion; he will be beaten and buffeted, until moved to cry, "Few and evil have been the days of the years of my pilgrimage!" But he will have no just ground of complaint if the desired end is accomplished. The clew of the problem of suffering is not "Wherefore?" but "Whereunto?" It is written, "No affliction for the present seemeth to be joyous but grievous; but in the end it worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby." We shall see Jacob coming out of his experience, as gold from the furnace, to be crowned a "prince of God."

Let us observe, further, the divine process in *the Making of a Family.*

For, not the individual but the family is the unit of history, as in the membership of the Church of God. It is written, "He setteth the solitary in families." The covenant is made with a man "and his children after him."

It was God's intent from the beginning to set apart a household that should be the depositary of the Oracles and by whom the Messianic hope should be transmitted to future ages. In the chronicles of England, the Crown, as an imperial trust, has thus descended, for a period of eight hundred years, from William the Conqueror to Edward VII, by a narrowing process through Plantagenets, Tudors, and other households to this day.

In the family of Adam the selection fell on Seth; in the family of Seth, upon Noah; in the family of Noah, upon Shem; in the family of Shem, upon Abraham; and in the family of Abraham, upon Jacob. The birthright followed the call and the Messianic trust was thus passed on to future generations. At the time of our narrative the household of Jacob numbered seventy souls. He had twelve sons, one of whom, Judah, was to be presently chosen as the depositary of the sacred trust. As this family is to play so important a part in the consummation of the great purpose, it must obviously be prepared for it.

How will God fit that family for its place? Again by discipline. It was not possible that Jacob should suffer alone; since no man liveth or dieth unto himself. His household must suffer with him.

It is apparent, even to a casual reader, how darkly the shadow of sin and sorrow fell over the home at Lahai-roi. It was twenty odd years since Joseph had been made away with by his brethren. The cry of his father on seeing the blood-stained coat, "My son is rent in pieces!" had ever since been ringing in that shepherd's hut. That was the "skeleton in the closet."

The guilty secret had been shut up like a pent fury in the breasts of these brethren; vain remorse had embittered their lives. This was in part the training of that household for its place. For sin itself is included in the "all things" which "work together" for the perfecting of the mighty plan. And "all's well that ends well."

We observe, still further, the divine process in *the Making of a Nation;* for God has to do with nations, as with families and individuals.

The people of Norway have recently elected a new king, who takes the name of a sovereign who reigned five hundred years ago. In casting their ballots they may have supposed that the choice wholly rested with them; but the heart of both kings and people is "in the hand of the Lord, as are the rivers of water."

And how will God make of Jacob and his household the nation which he proposes to use in the furthering of his purpose? The process begins with the setting out for Egypt, the Journey now before us. This event is fraught with far-reaching consequences. It is the fourth of the historic migrations of the race.*

By a curious combination of circumstances the wagons had been provided for his transportation and were waiting at his door. The old shepherd had been informed that Joseph was yet alive and was governor over Egypt, and that the waiting wagons had been sent to carry him thither: "and his heart fainted, for he believed them not!"

* The first was the departure of Cain and his tribe to the land of Nod. The second, that of the three sons of Noah from Ararat. The third, that of Abraham "to a country that he knew not."

It would appear that he could not finally determine upon this journey until he had gone to Beer-sheba, near by, to consult with God. He offered a sacrifice there; and "the Lord spake to him in a vision of the night." His heart was strengthened in this vision by a fourfold promise:

First, "Fear not, for I will go down with thee." At the beginning of the career of Jacob he had seen a vision at Bethel, a ladder on which angels were going up with his prayers and coming down with blessings: and then and there, with the instinct of a bargainer, he had said, "If thou wilt be with me and keep me in the way that I should go and give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, then shall Jehovah be my God." He had not always lived up to the terms of that covenant; but God had unceasingly been true to it. And now God renews the assurance: "I will be with thee."

Second, "And Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes." Here was a mighty appeal to the bond of affection which had ever existed between Jacob and his favorite son. It was above a score of years since he had seen him. How his heart must have leaped at the thought of this meeting, and in the assurance that Joseph should abide with him to the end and close his eyes!

Third, "I will there make of thee a great nation." Here is the promise given to Abraham, who, over and over, when his faith failed him, looked at the starry heavens and heard the Voice, "So shall thy seed be!" God has not forgotten; but he makes no haste, since "the eternal years are his." There must be a long period of pain and adversity, of bondage and weary

wandering, before the realization of that promise; but the time was coming when Balaam should stand upon the heights of Peor, with the tents of the nation gleaming before him, and cry, "Who can count the dust of Israel?"

Fourth, "I will surely bring thee up again." In other words, Egypt was not to be the abiding-place of Jacob's posterity. A "promised land" awaited them. Egypt was but the University where they were to pursue the curriculum which should fit them for their life-work. In due time they would make their way out of Egypt to become a great nation; which in turn should pass on through the centuries, taking the Oracles as a sacred trust, to reject its own Messiah in fullness of time and to be thenceforth a nation without a king, a country, a government or a capital city—a nation of wanderers upon the face of the earth—yet ever segregated and possessed of an inextinguishable life.

So the wagon-train set forth from Beersheba; the old man, with his household and retinue of servants and retainers, his flocks and herds and household gear. And they journeyed on until they came to the border of Egypt. There Joseph came to meet them; the Grand Vizier in his chariot, arrayed in robes of royal state, to meet an old shepherd coming from the parched lands of Canaan. They had not seen each other since that fatal day when Joseph went out to watch his flocks. Time had wrought great changes; but it had not dimmed the memory of the past nor diminished their mutual love.

The story is told simply but eloquently: "And

Joseph went to his father and fell on his neck and wept a good while. And Jacob said, Now let me die since I have seen thy face!"

If the narrative, just here, were reduced to terms of the present day, it would read like a sermon on filial piety. A man who came to New York City to make his fortune, years ago, and has so prospered that he is a recognized leader in our great industries and enterprises, hears that his father is coming to town. Will he receive him with open arms? Or, will he shrink a trifle from walking arm in arm with the farmer in homespun, sunburned, and with callous hands, unfamiliar with the conventionalities of social life, who pauses to gaze at the tall buildings, and look in at the windows along the street?

Then the wagon-train moved on toward the Capital where Jacob was "presented at Court." Call in your dramatist and let him paint it. *Scene:* the most magnificent audience room on earth. *Dramatis Personæ:* Pharaoh and his noblemen; Joseph, the Grand Vizier; Group of Shepherds; Jacob, an aged countryman.

And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, "How old art thou?"

And Jacob said, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have they been."

And Pharaoh said unto the brethren of Joseph, "What is your occupation?"

And they answered, "Thy servants be shepherds. For to sojourn in thy land are we come; because thy servants have no pasture for their flocks; for the famine is sore in the land of Canaan."

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "The land of Egypt

is before thee: in the best of the land make thy father and thy brethren to dwell."

So to the land of Goshen they betook themselves, to watch their flocks and multiply and make history. And there they dwelt a separated race, separated by the fact that in the eyes of the Egyptians their pastoral calling made them an impure caste. They were thus providentially prevented from intermarrying or intermingling with the idolaters who surrounded them.

So passed a period of seventeen years, when a messenger came in haste to Joseph, saying, "Behold thy father is sick." The royal chariot sped to Goshen and Joseph was at the bedside. His father "strengthened himself and sat up"; and leaning upon the top of his staff—possibly the very staff with which he had crossed Jabbok in the olden days—he blessed Joseph and his sons and brethren. When, in that historic benediction, he came to the blessing on Judah his dim eyes must surely have brightened, for the prophecy of Messiah was upon his lips: "Judah is a lion's whelp! The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The Lion of the Tribe of Judah! Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. This is that Shiloh who, being lifted up, was destined to draw all nations unto him. Thus dimly was the mighty plan unveiled before the patriarch, ere Joseph bent over and closed his eyes.

It is important that, in reading history, we should bear in mind the "one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves." The going down of Jacob and

his household into Egypt was a movement of vast importance as a factor in the preparation for the coming of Christ. In fact all passing events are but incidents leading on to that dénouement. The actors are mere lay figures. The pilgrims who set out in that wagon-train from Lahai-roi had no thought of making history. How little did the Pilgrim Fathers who set sail from Delft-Haven dream of the part which they were to take in the evolution of our republic! In the passage of the centuries, by the logic of events, the divine purpose grows clearer and clearer; and we perceive how all things, even those which we call happenings, are conspiring toward the ultimate triumph of divine grace. Maranatha! He cometh! Make way for the King; the Lion of the Tribe of Judah who shall bring in the truce of God. Then the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God.

JOURNEY VII

IN WHICH MOSES FLEES FOR HIS LIFE TO THE DESERT OF MIDIAN

It was two hundred years and more since Jacob had gone down into Egypt with his wagon-train. Meanwhile his family, then but seventy souls, had grown to the number of two millions, or about one-third of the entire population of Egypt. To prevent any further increase, a decree was issued requiring all male children of the Hebrews to be cast upon the waters of the Nile. This will not be regarded as incredible by any student of the Oriental despotisms of that time or of the anti-Semitic atrocities in Russia to-day.

One of the Hebrew children, destined to play an important part in history, was saved from that ancient massacre by a chain of circumstances which suggested his name, Moses, "child of the water." It is a true saying, "A man is immortal until his work is done." To every man is assigned a place in the universal plan; and if he does not live at cross-purposes with that plan, he will surely find himself providentially adjusted to it.

The lifetime of Moses was a hundred and twenty years; and this was divided into three equal parts. It is worthy of note that two-thirds of his entire life was passed in getting ready for the other third. Our purpose here is to trace his equipment for service; and

therein we shall see *how a man is educated for his place in the plan of God.*

The first period of forty years was passed at Court. The palace was his academy. As the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter he was heir-presumptive to the throne. His was an enviable lot. He dwelt in the midst of royal luxury, having the advantage of all the training which would naturally be provided for a youth with so brilliant an outlook before him.

Stephen in his defense before the Sanhedrin says, that Moses "was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in word and deed" (Acts 7:22). It was formerly the fashion for the destructive critics to claim that Moses could not have written the Pentateuch because the art of writing was unknown in his time. But the man with the spade came along and put that argument to shame, by unearthing the cities where Moses spent his youth. It was thus made to appear that mechanics, art, science and philosophy, jurisprudence and literature were at a high stage of excellence in those days. There was a University in the royal city of On, which was quite comparable with our most famous institutions. Not a few of the founders of the historic culture of Greece received their early training in the Egyptian schools. Pythagoras was educated in Thebes, Herodotus in Hieropolis, Thales in Memphis, and Solon in the University of Sais. The ruins of a great public library are shown, having on its archway the inscription "Dispensary of the Soul." The Egypt of Moses' time stood in the forefront of civilization. Her artisans were acquainted with hydraulic engineering; a water-

course was opened between Bubastis and the Red Sea by Rameses II, at an expense of one hundred and twenty thousand lives and treasure incalculable, which gave to the French engineer, Lesseps, the suggestion of the Suez Canal. "No art of writing in Egypt"? Her people covered the walls of their homes and tombs and temples with inscriptions, which the dry air and drifting sands have kept legible to this day. In the marshy grounds along the Nile grew the papyrus (whence our word "paper") which made writing a common art. A Golden Age of ancient literature was the reign of the Pharaoh of the oppression, fifteen centuries before the Christian Era. The court librarian at that time was Kagabu, illustrious as a novelist and poet. An epic poem is extant by Pentaur which celebrates the prowess of Rameses the Great; and a complete novel called "The Story of Two Brothers," probably the oldest work of fiction in the world, which was written by Enna for the entertainment of a prince who afterwards perished with his host in the Red Sea. "No art of writing in those days"? It is obvious that if the destructive critics would give any permanence to the value of their arguments against the valid claims of the Scriptures, they must enjoin the man with the spade. The logic of events is the best defender of the word of God.

But the education of Moses was not only in the province of books; in the necessity of the case he was trained to be a man of affairs. As prospective ruler of the people he must be familiar with their laws. And the Egyptians had an elaborate code. In the Imperial Library at Paris is shown a fragment of the Maxims

of Ptah-hotep, an extended treatise on ethics. The rule of right living is laid down in the word Maat, "the straight and inflexible line." By the tutors and governors in charge of the heir-presumptive it was intended that this legal training should qualify him for his place at the head of the Egyptian Government; in fact, however, this was to be subsidized for use in another and larger place which had been prepared for him in divine providence, when he should become the law-giver of Israel and the intermediary of the Decalogue, the one perfect, divine, ethical symbol of the ages.

And Moses must have received, also, an extensive training in statecraft and diplomacy; since in his intended office he would be brought into political relations with other kingdoms and governments. It is affirmed by Josephus that he was, furthermore, appointed to a place in command of the army and in that capacity led a successful expedition against the Ethiopians. The time was coming when, in the leadership of Israel, his knowledge as to the proper equipment and manipulation of an army would prove invaluable to him. The man who is destined to a position of commanding influence must know more than books; he must know how to do things. He is doubly armed for service who is both a scholar and a practical man.

Further still, Moses was initiated into the mysteries of the Egyptian religion. The great temples of Thebes, Karnak, Dendara, and Memphis, whose ruins are the wonder of the world, were probably standing in those days. What visions of splendor their names suggest! In those temples the Principle of Life was

worshiped under the image of Ammon-Ra, the sun-god. All life was regarded as sacred: the bull, the crocodile, the luminous-eyed cat, the serpent, the ibis, and the beetle, received divine honors. The youth in the palace was prepared for leadership in the established religion and in due time was made a priest of Osiris. He rode in his state chariot with the processions which moved, between long avenues of sphinxes, to the shrine of Ammon-Ra. He made himself acquainted with the rites and ceremonies which were recorded in the forty-five sacred books. The religion of Egypt is dead long ago; its sacred books are known only as they are deciphered from the mummy crypts; its temples are in ruins; the monuments of Egypt have outlived her gods.

How long could the life of Moses continue in this way? The time would surely come when he must choose between Ammon-Ra and the God of his fathers. The time did come; and his decision is recorded thus: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." It was a notable choice and destined to be followed by stupendous results.

This was the turning point in his life. On awaking from his luxurious dreams of royal pomp and power he turned his thoughts to his oppressed countrymen. "It came into his heart to visit them." He went out and "looked upon their burdens," and his heart was stirred within him. In the atmosphere of the palace

he had felt little or no concern about them; and probably his means of observation were few. But now he saw them under the whip of scorpions. "Their lives were bitter." He resolved on action. There were above two millions of them; why should they not win their freedom? He would lead them in a glorious insurrection.

Then occurred the mistake of his life. On seeing one of his brethren suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him; he smote the taskmaster and buried him in the sand. "For he supposed that his brethren would understand how God by his hand would deliver them." But they understood not. Alas! they had been dulled to their pain by long bondage, so that they merely resented his interference. His precipitancy was like that of old John Brown of Ossawatomie, who, with a brain unsettled by the wrongs of slavery, led a forlorn hope at Harper's Ferry, where, barricaded behind the doors of the engine-house, he fought against hopeless odds, until one of his sons lay dead and another dying at his feet. It was, indeed, the blunder of a crazy man! But God can overrule blunders for the ultimate good; when our armies were marching a little later in the war for freedom, they kept time to the battle-hymn,

> "John Brown's body lies a-moldering in the grave,
> But his soul goes marching on."

The rumor of Moses's adventure having come to the ears of the authorities, he was obliged to flee for his life. Redhanded, with a price on his head, he betook himself out of harm's way. Following the shore of the

Red Sea around by the Gulf of Akaba he came to a land of desolation; where, wearied with his eight days' journey, he sat upon the curb of a well.

As he sat there, his soul was perplexed. No doubt he reviewed the past. What an outlook had been his; and here he sat, a homeless fugitive! The romance of his dream had vanished. "The future is all dark before me," he thought; "I hoped to enfranchise my people. I acted on impulse; but I meant well. And, behold, I have only my labor for my pains. The people have no spirit left in them; they have no desire to be free. I wash my hands of their affairs. I have had enough of reform. Henceforth I will interfere with no man's quarrel."

As he meditated thus, he was conscious of the approach of a group of water-carriers, maidens with pitchers on their heads. Dimly and without interest he saw them dipping their pitchers in the well. Then came a sound of hurrying footsteps and a sudden cry for help! A company of hostile shepherds had attacked the water-carriers; instantly Moses was himself again. His eager spirit returned. All his fine resolutions of non-interference went to the winds. Chivalry to the rescue! He laid about him with his staff and put the enemy to flight. Thus did he show himself, in Chaucer's words, "a very parfit gentil knight."

This was the beginning of the second forty years of his education. As the palace had been his Academy, so now the desert was to be his University. One of those water-carriers became his wife; and, in the employ of her father Reuel, he settled down to a shepherd's life.

It was a strange contrast to his eventful and luxurious life at Court. Here nothing happened. In the morning he led his flock to pastures and brought them back at evening to the fold. It was a monotonous round of simple tasks; "as tedious as a twice-told tale, vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man."

Had he forgotten? Was the old life indeed a closed book? In his solitude among the hills did memory fall asleep and conscience die? Had the war-horse of his ambition been hopelessly harnessed to a treadmill? Or did he, ever and anon, wonder what his foster-mother was doing in the palace? Did he hear again the priests chanting in the Temple of Osiris? Were his ears pierced, in the night-watches, by the cry of bondmen under the whip of the scorpions? O, he could not have wholly forgotten! Else why did he name his first-born Gershom, meaning, "Banishment"?

The weary curriculum of that desert life was an essential part of his preparation for service. There is no university like the solitude. "There's wit there, ye'll get there, ye'll find nae ither where."

For one thing, he was learning himself. In the cares of public life he had had little opportunity to look within. Now there is time to think; and the more he thinks, the more intimately does he become acquainted with the man Moses. He grows distrustful of himself; and, in the calm communion of nature, tempers his fiery spirit. So well does he master this lesson, that, when the forty years of this humdrum life are over we shall find him wearing a new name, "the Meekest of Men."

And here, too, he is learning God. In the shadow of the hills he lifts his heart on high. It is here that

he gets that great conception of the divine hand in human affairs, which is crystallized in "the Song of Moses" (Ps. 90). "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. . . . Let thy work appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children; And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: *and establish thou the work of our hands upon us: yea, the work of our hands establish thou it!*"

And, further, in this desert life he frames an adequate thought of duty. He discovers his place in the plan of God. He knows now that his mistake was precipitancy; he begins to perceive the importance of time as a factor in the problem of success. How much better if he had not taken matters into his own hands that day! He will wait henceforth upon the Lord; and the time will come when God will meet him at the burning bush and say, "It is the fullness of time! I AM THAT I AM sendeth you. Go back to Egypt and say unto Pharaoh, Let my people go!"

JOURNEY VIII

IN WHICH THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL QUIT FOREVER THE HOUSE OF THEIR BONDAGE

A MAN from the desert of Midian presented himself at the Egyptian Court demanding the immediate emancipation of two million slaves. His words were, "Thus saith Jehovah, the God of Israel, Let my people go!"

And Pharaoh answered, "Who is Jehovah? I know Ammon-Ra; I know Isis and Osiris, and all the gods of our Pantheon; but who is Jehovah?"

The man from the desert said, "He shall speak for himself."

In his hand was a shepherd's crook; he raised it and the battle of the gods began. The Nile ran red as blood and stank. The River-god was put to shame!

He waved his rod again; and frogs came up from the river even into the bedchambers and the kneading-troughs of the people. The frog-headed god had turned upon his worshipers!

He waved it again; and the air swarmed with gnats and beetles. Their scarabæus became a bane and a weariness unto them!

He waved it again; and behold, there was a murrain on the cattle of the field! The god Apis could not help himself or them!

He waved it again; and the priests and magicians,

the ministers of their religion, were smitten with boils and blains, and walked before them as a laughing-stock!

He waved it again; a tempest of hail fell upon the sacred leeks and onions!

He waved it again; and the air swarmed with locusts. Did the people worship Life? They should have enough of it!

He waved it again; and the light of heaven was extinguished. A night that could be felt brooded over the land. It was as if Ammon-Ra, the sun-god, had been smitten in the face!

Yet, once more; and from the homes of Egypt rose a crescendo of grief. Death smote them on every side, "from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maidservant that sat behind the mill." The heir-apparent to the throne, who was worshiped as the impersonation of Deity, lay dead in the palace! Alas, for the gods!

This was "that night of Jehovah." So did he make the gods of the Pantheon a hissing and a by-word. Was it strange that Pharaoh was moved to heed the demand, "Let my people go"?

At midnight they stood harnessed and ready. During the weary weeks of that battle royal they had been forewarned and forearmed; so on the set night of the fourteenth of Nisan they were waiting for the signal. The blood of the sacrificial lamb had been sprinkled on their doorposts. They gathered around their paschal tables, staff in hand, sandals under foot, and girded about their loins. Then came the signal: a shriek of sorrow piercing the night air. The fathers

grasped their staves with a firmer hand, the mothers gathered their little children in their arms, and, amid the panic of Egypt's despair, they set forth; two millions of slaves going to meet their destiny. This was the Fifth of the historic Migrations. It was an émeute such as was never seen before or since; six hundred thousand men with their wives and children going out of a land paralyzed by sudden calamity. Strangely delivered; whither bound?

As they set forth, a singular cloud appeared in the heavens and moved on before them. It glowed like a nebula. The light faded with the breaking day, but the cloud remained. In the years before them they were to grow familiar with that "pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night." They called it "the Angel of Jehovah"; "the Shekinah"; "the Presence"; "the most excellent Glory." It was the abiding symbol of the Covenant which God had made with Adam in the protevangel, "The seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head"; and afterward with the patriarchs, Seth, and Noah, and Shem, and Abraham, and Jacob. It was always the Covenant of the coming Christ. It gave assurance that, however God might tarry, he had not forgotten that in the fullness of time Immanuel was to appear to deliver the world from sin.

It is scarcely necessary to say that the truth of the narrative is called in question by the destructive critics. In fact, and as a matter of course, the historicity of every part of the early Scriptures is thus called in question, for no apparent reason save that it is a portion of the Word of God.

In this particular case the denial is founded partly

on the fact that there is no other record of the Exodus. But why should there be? The fact that there were two millions of slaves in Egypt at the time of this event is indisputable; the monuments bear witness to it. And the fact that those two millions were presently found settled in the land of Palestine is also attested by indisputable evidence. If this multitude did not go out of Egypt in the manner indicated, the question arises, How did they get out of it? We believe that the Scriptures afford a satisfactory answer; it obviously devolves upon those who deny the scriptural record to account for the transfer in some other way.

The denial is based, secondly, upon the improbability of an event so stupendous as the sudden migration of two millions of people. But why should this be regarded as improbable when so ready credence is given to such corresponding movements as the Aryan migrations? It has long been the custom of ethnologists to account for existing national adjustments by referring them to a series of precisely similar migrations from the central plain of Asia. A recent case in point, occurred on January 5, 1771, when Oubacha, a rustic leader of the Kalmucks, led four hundred and twenty thousand persons from the banks of the Volga to their subsequent home in China.

The third ground of the denial of the Exodus is the assumption that Pharaoh, the most potent sovereign of his time, would not have permitted these people to go. And, from the standpoint of the destructive critics, that is quite true. The trouble, however, is that they leave God out of the reckoning. They deny miracles and special providences. The man who undertakes a thou-

sand years hence to write the history of Russia from a purely materialistic standpoint, will no doubt affirm, in like manner, that it was immeasurably improbable that the Czar should have allowed his people to establish a constitutional government; but, just now, it appears as if God might not ask the Czar whether or no he would permit it. The fact is that after the Children of Israel had escaped out of the house of their bondage, they were constantly reminded that it was by the immediate interposition of the divine hand. The song of their emancipation was, "Who is like unto our God, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? He hath led forth the people whom he hath redeemed!" In every great historic movement that has occurred along the path of the centuries there has been an evident chain of special providences; and chroniclers like Hume and Gibbon have wholly missed the philosophy of history, because they have failed to perceive this. The fault of their method is exposed in the words, "Ye do err, not knowing the power of God."

So, then, assuming the Exodus to be an established fact, we proceed to consider its significance. As one of the great early migrations it was destined to have a far-reaching influence:

(1) On the future history of the Children of Israel. We shall find, in a subsequent consideration of their journey through the wilderness, that it furnished the deep foundations of their national life.

(2) It was a serious blow to Egypt. At the time of the Exodus she stood in the very forefront of the nations; this event marked the beginning of the end. Go stand in the shadow of the obelisk in Central Park in

New York and look on the hieroglyphics that commemorate the splendor of her golden age. Where is the magnificence of the Pharaohs now?

> ". . . . They lie in glory,
> Cased in cedar and shut in sacred gloom,
> Swathed in linen and precious unguents old,
> Painted with cinnabar and rich with gold;
> Silent they rest in solemn salvatory,
> Sealed from the moth and the owl and the flittermouse,
> Each with his name on his brow."

Nay; there are not even legible names on their brows. The Pharaohs are passed into oblivion. The glory of Egypt has departed. It is a land to-day of mule-drivers and blind beggars.

And the religion that was brought into conflict with Jehovah, what of it? Who bows before Ammon-Ra in these days? Who cares for the mysteries of Isis? Is there any so poor as to do reverence to the sacred bull? If you would find the gods of Egypt, you must read their story on byssus bands unwrapped from the mummied dead. The battle-royal of the centuries is over. Jehovah is God!

(3) It thus becomes apparent that the influence of the Exodus falls over the whole world. The marching out of the fugitives meant that a new factor was to be introduced into the problem of civilization. They carried with them on their journey the Messianic hope, as a sacred trust, to be transmitted to future ages. If we follow them along the centuries we shall find them cherishing that Hope as the very secret of their national life, until they come to *Via Dolorosa;* and there —O memorable path of vanished dreams and aspira-

tions!—they drive before them the Messiah for whom they had waited so long, a prisoner in bonds, to meet an ignominious death; and the air is vibrant with their cry, "His blood be on us and on our children!"

We are the inheritors of the Hope which they cast away. The children of Japheth have moved into the tents of Shem. It is by reason of Christian civilization that the world grows brighter every day.

In a remarkable picture called "The Repose in Egypt," by Gérôme, the Sphinx is represented as the genius of an effete civilization, dull-eyed and wondering, in the desolation of the desert. It is night. In the arms of the great image the virgin mother is reposing with a child on her bosom; and from his face there radiates a light which penetrates the darkness of the surrounding wastes. Thus history begins. Out of the bosom of old Egypt comes the Messianic promise, the Hope of Israel, which will gladden the world forever. To know this waking Child is life eternal; for this is to know Jehovah, who reigns upon the ruins of all Pantheons, since he alone is God.

(4) The inheritance of America in the benefits of the Exodus is plain to all reverent eyes. Ours is a Christian land.

It is a far cry from Rameses to San Salvador; yet the red cross banner which was planted by Columbus on the shores of the Western World when he christened it "Land of the Saviour" was resplendent with the same light that shone in the pillar of cloud.

It is a long journey from the Red Sea to Plymouth Rock; but the Pilgrims who landed there were fleeing

from the same sort of oppression and seeking the same inestimable boon.

"What sought they thus afar? Bright jewels of the mine,
The wealth of seas, the spoils of war? They sought a faith's pure shrine.
Aye, call it holy ground, the ground whereon they trod:
They left unstained what there they found, Freedom to worship God."

It is a great distance from the palace of the Pharaohs to Independence Hall in Philadelphia; yet our forefathers who deliberated there, as to the great fundamental facts of constitutional freedom, were traversing the same ground that was contested in that ancient battle of the gods.

Our birthright as a nation is the Messianic hope. The light in the torch of Bartholdi's "Liberty" is the light of the Shekinah. The "preachment" * in a recent message of President Roosevelt, when reduced to its lowest and its highest terms, is simply the call of Moses, "Let my people go!" which finds its full fruition in the Christian heritage, "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

(5) The relation of the Exodus to the Christian Church is a vital one. The Jewish Church forfeited its inheritance in the Messianic hope when it crucified Christ. The Christian Church then became the depositary of the sacred trust. The Jews to-day number eleven millions, who are wanderers upon the face of the earth. The Church of Christ, which had its

* "Our President is greatly given to preachments."—One of our Morning Newspapers.

beginning in the little company that came down the outer stairway from the upper room in Jerusalem on the night before the crucifixion, has been multiplied from century to century until there are four hundred millions of people who rejoice to call themselves after the name of Christ! It behooves them to bear in constant remembrance a fact which was emphasized by Christ himself, that "salvation is of the Jews." Jesus was a Jew. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." In the providence of God the Casket of Jewels which was entrusted to the care of the chosen people has descended to us.

And with this high privilege there is a corresponding responsibility. We are appointed to be the purveyors of the world's spiritual life. It devolves upon us to make known the Messianic Hope to the uttermost parts of the earth and to the last man in it. And we are bound to bear in remembrance, day and night unceasingly, the pathetic fact that eleven millions of those who should have been foremost in receiving the Christ are obdurate still in rejecting him. Let us pray for the peace of Jerusalem! "They shall prosper that love thee." May the time be hastened when the eyes of Israel shall be opened to see that Jesus is the Christ of God.

(6) There is a last word to those who, living in the high noon of Gospel civilization, refuse to believe in him who is the very heart and life of it. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you; that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Christ has been evidently set forth crucified among you?" To withstand the appeal of the Gospel in these days and under ex-

isting conditions is to sin against light and reason; it is to sin against books and progress and the logic of events; it is to sin against the irrefutable testimony of innumerable witnesses; it is to sin against the hearing of one's ears and the sight of one's eyes.

JOURNEY IX

IN WHICH THE ISRAELITES WANDER UP AND DOWN IN THE WILDERNESS

THE fugitives, on leaving Egypt, apparently made a bad mistake; instead of turning northward in the direction of the land of Promise they took the southern road and headed toward the Red Sea and the Desert. "Aha!" said Pharaoh, "if they keep on we shall have them in a trap; they will be entangled in the land." His men of war were ordered to follow and intercept them. On the evening of the first day the fugitive slaves reached Succoth and went into camp. The close of the second found them at Etham, "on the edge of the wilderness." The third brought them to Pi-hahiroth; and this was the trap. Before them rolled the sea, on either side were mountains, and behind them they could hear the footfall of Pharaoh's host. It was apparently a hopeless situation. Yet they could not have been mistaken in coming this way; for had they not followed the pillar of cloud?

No; the mistake was on the part of Pharaoh, as he was presently to discover, when his horses and their riders were drowned in the sea. The fugitives were not entrapped, neither were they to be entangled in the land or swallowed up in the wilderness. Pharaoh was reckoning without God; who had a plan for the

Children of Israel so definite that every step in its development was marked out before him. The road leading to the North would indeed have brought them to Canaan in a fortnight or thereabouts, while the southern road meant forty years of wandering. He knew this: it is written, "He led them around by the way of the wilderness." Why? *He wanted a nation, and this was his way of making it.*

THE MAKING OF A NATION

The great caravan was only six weeks out when it came to Mount Sinai. There the process began. The man in command, who had for forty years pastured his flocks in the shadow of this mountain, now went up into its summit and remained forty days in communion with God. And when he returned to the people he brought with him the symbols of their national life.

The first thing needed was an Apology, or Statement of the case.

Our forefathers began the Declaration of Independence with a Preamble, on this wise: *"When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the Powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation."* In the case of Israel there was a corresponding statement in the prefatory words at Sinai, "I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house

of bondage." The responsibility for the Exodus is thus briefly thrown back upon God. The people were now to be nationalized in obedience to his behest and to be kept forever "separated" by their belief in him.

The next logical step in the building of a nation is the framing of a Constitution.

The Constitution of Israel was the Decalogue. The Ten Commandments are a summary of the fundamental principles which are involved in national life. This summary is brief but comprehensive. The platform is broad enough to furnish an outlook for universal conquest and for the establishment of an ultimate commonwealth of God. It is the one ethical symbol which has never been amended or improved. At the beginning of Christ's ministry he went up into a mountain and delivered his inaugural, as King of the new Kingdom of truth and righteousness; and his Sermon on the Mount was an exposition and amplification of the Ten Commandments; as he said, "I am not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it."

The next thing necessary was a Code of Statutes, or laws of more specific application to the responsibilities of civil life.

In these statutes, as given in the Book of Leviticus, we find a comprehensive statement of the Rights of Man. These rights are defined for all the relations of life; domestic, social, and political. They are briefly the rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Not a few of these statutes, particularly such as relate to marriage and divorce, and to the purchase and possession of property, are perpetuated in the jurisprudence of the civilized world to-day.

The next thing needed was a System of Ordinances for the regulation of religious life.

This was made necessary by the fact that the government was a theocracy, in which there was a close union of Church and State. The center of the ceremonial system was the Tabernacle, in which everything, being sprinkled with blood, pointed prophetically to the Lamb of God. The ordinances were, for the most part, included under two heads: sacrifices, which had reference to the expiation of sin; and purifications, which symbolized the washing away of it. All these were fulfilled in Christ, who therefore at his coming "took away the handwriting of ordinances which was against us, nailing it to his cross." But, while blotting it out, he established two splendid memorials of it; namely, Baptism, which takes the place of all purifications, and the Eucharist, which gathers into itself all sacrifices and speaks eloquently of Christ who in our behalf was "offered once for all."

The next thing needed was Organization.

This, in the Theocracy, must be twofold. On the one hand a civil organization was established, in which God himself was sovereign and Moses his vicegerent. There was a Congress or Parliament of two houses; the Upper House consisting of the twelve Princes or leaders of the tribes, and the Lower House of the seventy elders. On the other hand, there was an ecclesiastical government in which God was again supreme and Moses his under-shepherd; with him were associated the priests, whose function was to offer sacrifice, and the prophets, who instructed the people in the Word of God.

One thing more was needed, to wit, Discipline.

The people remained at Sinai about a year; then the pillar of cloud lifted, and at the trumpet call, "Arise, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered!" they moved on into "the great and terrible wilderness." Here they wandered to and fro for a period of thirty-nine years. But they were not "entangled." Those were years of discipline, which was necessary for the development of the nation. In all their vicissitudes these people were guided by the pillar of cloud. And when their wanderings ceased they marched into Canaan no longer a rabble of fugitives but a theocratic nation with a mobilized army; the most perfect organization that the world has ever seen to this day.

THE MAKING OF A CHRISTIAN.

In all this we observe an epitome of the Philosophy of life. God's Providence is distributive. It has to do not with nations only but with individuals. He leads a man "around by the way of the wilderness." He might have brought Israel by a shorter route; but the conquest of Canaan was too great an enterprise for a rabble of slaves. There is no short road to character. The soul is trained for spiritual life. It is nursed into power and usefulness. Such wandering is not entanglement. "He leadeth me, O blessed thought!" To see his Providence is to unlock the meaning of the desert-life. Here is the solution of the Decrees: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you."

The first thing in a man's journey toward the best and highest, is to learn God. He who turns aside from

his burdensome tale of bricks to witness the battle of the gods, who hears the Voice "I am that I am!" and, crossing the edge of the wilderness, comes within sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder and the Voice saying "I am the Lord thy God!" is beginning to live; as it is written, "This is life eternal, to know God."

The next thing is Law. The consciousness of law is expressed in the word due-ty; that is, the thing which is due to God. The answer to the question "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" is this, "What doth the Lord require of thee but to keep the commandments of the Lord, which I have commanded thee this day" (Deut. 10:13). But that way lies condemnation; for "there is no difference, we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God."

The next thing, then, is the Gospel. For "by the Law is the knowledge of sin"; and the Law thus becomes "a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ," whose blood cleanseth from sin. The young ruler who came prostrating himself before Jesus, and asking, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" was so convicted by his answer, "Keep the Commandments," that he cried out, "What lack I yet?" The one thing lacking in the creed of a moralist is the hope of pardon; and this can be found nowhere else except in Christ crucified, since "without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin."

When a man has discovered these three, God, Law, and the Gospel, and has vitally appropriated them by faith, he needs one thing more, namely, Discipline. And this is gotten in the school of Experience. He is

divinely led by "the way of the wilderness." It is a way that he knoweth not; but God knows it. To the onlooker he seems entangled in the land; but all things are working together for his good. The pillar of the cloud is ever before him, and the promise is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end."

His disappointments are made to contribute to his spiritual growth. The Children of Israel were only three days out of Egypt when, with parched throats, they came to Marah, the bitter spring. But the tree that sweetened the waters grew near by.

The next encampment was at Elim. O, the rare surprises of Christian joy! The desert has its oases where we rest in the shadow of the palm trees and drink of the waters of the King's well. How often we go burdened to the closet and the sanctuary and "leave our burden at his feet and bear a song away."

Our privations, too, are salutary for us. There are some things which a Christian cannot have. In going out of Egypt he leaves the pleasures of sin behind him. And the temptation to murmur is almost irresistible. "O for the flesh-pots and the leeks and the onions!" But if we cannot have these, we can have manna "plenteous as hoarfrost," rich and free. Privation has its compensations, not the least of which is learning how to do without, and how to sing,

"Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at Thy throne of grace,
Let this petition rise:
Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
And let me live to Thee."

Conflict, also, is a part of this discipline. We cannot cross the desert without having to face the embattled front of temptation's forces, as Og the king of Bashan and Sihon, king of the Amorites. But men grow strong in battle, winning strength of their vanquished foes. "Wherefore, count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into divers temptations." The sweetest joy of Christian living is the consciousness of having won out in a hard tussle with a besetting sin. "We are more than conquerors," says Paul, "through him that loved us." This is the New Name in the white stone given to him that overcometh: the honor, as yet anonymous, of being "more than a conqueror." We cannot now understand what that is; we can only dream of it.

And when we are defeated, even this experience is subsidized to our spiritual growth. The worst defeat that the Children of Israel ever suffered was when they came to Kadesh-Barnea, within a bowshot of their inheritance, where they looked over into the Land of Promise, trembled at the giants, and retreated into the wilderness without a blow. It is written, "They could not enter in because of their unbelief." They must wander yet thirty-eight years before they would grasp the truth that "all things are possible to him that believeth." So we journey up and down through the land, learning the lesson which a Christian must ever learn, that there are no Anakim who can stand before God.

Our sorrows, too, are a part of our training. The pathway of Israel was lined with graves. "So part we sadly in the wilderness, to meet again." It is a true saying, "We do not sorrow as those that are with-

out hope." Our farewells are all in the divine plan. "No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it worketh the peaceable fruit of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." The vision of heaven is full of the kindly faces and beckoning hands of those who have gone before and await us.

But our sins—alas, our sins!—surely they are not included in the divine plan? Are they among the "all things" that work together for our good? They are. God so overrules them that when we reach heaven they shall follow us to the gate like captives dragged at our chariot wheels—but no further. The sins which are forgiven for Jesus' sake shall furnish the dark background against which the divine grace will shine like stars. In heaven we shall look back on the pit out of which we were delivered and praise God for his immeasurable mercy. The song of the angels who surround the throne is full of the melody of adoration; but there is a note of triumph which they cannot strike. The saints triumphant, who stand nearer than they, sing the praises of the Lamb that was slain: "Worthy art thou to receive honor and power and glory and dominion, for *thou hast washed us with thy blood* and made us to be kings and priests unto God!"

So ends the Wandering. "The end crowns the work." Remember all that way that the Lord hath led you! O, wonderful plan of God! The weaver at the loom casts no thread amiss. All things are working together for our good. All things! All! "God makes no mistakes," said a dying saint. He was remembering the way that the Lord had led him. Ours are all the

mistakes; and God overrules them all. Wonderful, wonderful plan! This is the love that passeth knowledge. Here from the standpoint of Sinai on the one hand and of Olivet on the other, is the clew to the Philosophy of Life. "All things work together for good to them that love God."

JOURNEY X

IN WHICH THE ISRAELITES CROSS THE JORDAN AND ENTER THE PROMISED LAND

THE custom of rearing monuments to perpetuate great facts or notable events is as old as history. Witness the cairns of Scotland, the round towers of Ireland, the Druid cromlechs of Stonehenge, and the obelisks of Egypt. The arch of Titus tells the sad story of the overthrow of Jerusalem. A granite pyramid surmounted by a bronze lion, on the field of Waterloo, commemorates "the earthquake of the nations." The sleeping lion of Thorwaldsen, carved in the face of the massive primeval rock at Lucerne, memorializes the valor of the Swiss Guard, who were "faithful unto death."

The altar reared by the Children of Israel at Gilgal, had a similar purpose in view. Its importance is certified by the fact that it was built by the express command of God. He said to Joshua, "Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where ye shall lodge this night." It was these stones that were built into the altar; and the people were instructed to have a suitable answer ready when, in coming time, their children should ask, "What mean these stones?"

If I had been a boy in Palestine and had seen this monument at Gilgal, I should certainly have asked my father, "What mean these stones?" And what would he have answered? Would he have knit his brow in perplexity, saying, "I know not"? Nay; in all Jewry there was none so forgetful of the glorious history of his people nor so unmindful of the divine interposition in their behalf, that an instant answer would not have sprung to his lips.

He would have said, "My son, this is a memorial of the faithfulness of God. Long, long ago, in Ur of the Chaldees, he said to Abraham, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.' And Abraham arose, by faith, and set out upon his journey. The way was long, but the pilgrim's heart was brave. Once and again the Lord renewed his covenant with him, saying, 'I will give the Promised Land to thee and thy children after thee.' His son, Jacob, settled in Beersheba with his twelve sons; the years passed, and there were wars and famines and many troubles; but the Lord did not forget. He still, on occasion, renewed his covenant, saying, I will surely give thee a land that floweth with milk and honey. At length our fathers went down into Egypt and were reduced to bondage; the heart went out of them as they groaned under the whip of scorpions. But the Lord still remembered his covenant; he bade them be of good courage, assuring them that in fullness of time he would lead them forth into a large and wealthy place and make of them a great nation. And when five hundred years had passed he brought them forth with a mighty hand and

a stretched-out arm. Then, wandering forty years in the wilderness, they murmured against God and provoked him by many sins; and still he did not forget; for his promise is Yea and Amen. He brought them finally to the banks of the Jordan, and there, by a miracle so stupendous that the world has never ceased to wonder at it, he wrought a complete deliverance and established them in the Promised Land. It was then and there that this altar was built, 'that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord that it is mighty, and that they might fear the Lord God forever.' "

So that is what these stones mean. God never forgets. A woman may forget the child of her bosom, but he never. "Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard? Hath it not been told thee from the beginning, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not neither is weary?" His patience is immeasurable. His loving kindness is infinite. Therefore, let us wait on the Lord and trust in him; for they that wait upon the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be moved; they shall mount up as on eagles' wings, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

But the altar at Gilgal commemorated not merely the general fact of the divine faithfulness; it had a more specific and immediate reference to a never-to-be-forgotten event, namely, the Crossing of the Jordan. Had this been effected by ordinary means there would have been no special call for a memorial; but here the arm of God was manifestly made bare in behalf of his people. This was a miracle. The river was

at the flood. By no possible means at their command could the multitude, gazing longingly over toward the Land of Promise, have crossed the torrent of waters that rolled before them. The record is on this wise: "It came to pass that when the feet of the priests that bare the Ark were dipped in the brim of the water, then the waters which came from above stood and rose up upon a heap; and those that came down toward the Sea of the Plain, failed and were cut off. And the priests stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground."

A miracle is simply a special interposition of divine power in the calm progress of events. All things move on in the ordinary course of Providence until a crisis arrives where human power is vain. Then "Man's extremity is God's opportunity." It is when we reach the end of our tether that God shows his arm. He helps those who help themselves.

Three things were required of the Children of Israel before the Lord would part the waters of the Jordan to bring them into their inheritance.

The first was Faith. These people had been here at Kadesh-Barnea thirty-nine years before; and they had looked over into the land of promise and hoped to enter it. They sent spies across who returned with clusters of grapes and pomegranates and other evidences of the richness of the country; but they reported that it was occupied by giants and so strongly fortified that it was useless to think of conquering it. "We be not able to go up against this people," they said; "for they be stronger than we. In their sight we are but as grasshoppers!" Two of the spies, however, Caleb and

Joshua, reported otherwise. They believed in the power of God. "Let us go up at once," they said, "and possess the land; we be well able to overcome it!" But the people were seized with a panic of fear. They cried out against their lot and murmured again for the happy days of Egypt. Therefore God sent them back again into the wilderness to keep on wandering until they should learn the lesson of faith. "They could not enter in," it is written, "because of their unbelief." They had yet to be convinced that nothing is too hard for God, and that all things are possible to those who believe in him.

In the subsequent school-life of the wilderness they did learn this lesson. The manna and the smitten rock, the victories over Og the king of Bashan and Sihon of the Amorites, the supernatural tokens of the divine Presence all along the way, were not in vain. And now the long journey was over; they had learned to believe. The doubt that had clipped their wings and cut the sinews of their strength and "tangled" them in the wilderness had given way to a firm confidence in God.

The second thing that was required of these people before God would work the great deliverance was Courage. And courage depends on faith. Self-reliance is a splendid thing; but no man can truly believe in himself who does not first believe in God. No man can make the most of himself who does not proceed along the line of the divine prescript, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you."

The difficulties in the way of conquest were as great

as they had ever been. The people knew that if they crossed the Jordan there was no way back. The giants were still over yonder, and there were the frowning walls of Jericho. If they were ever to possess that land they must fight their way.

And now they were ready. The wilderness had taught them courage. The rabble of slaves who escaped from Egypt had, by the logic of events, been organized into a nation with a formidable standing army. Not a few among them had won distinction on the thin red line of battle. The people were no longer smitten with fear in the presence of danger. They had looked on the pillar of cloud so long and had tested the promise of divine help so thoroughly, that they were now going up "harnessed," with resolute hearts and flashing eyes, to fight the Anakim and conquer the land which the Lord had promised them.

The third requirement was Obedience. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses so I will be with thee; and thou shalt command the priests that bear the Ark of the Covenant, saying, When we are come to the brink of the water of Jordan, ye shall stand still."

Was ever blinder obedience required than this? Jordan at the flood was rolling before them. "Go down to the brink and stand still!" Why stand still? "To see the salvation of the Lord!" Not until they have done their utmost will the miracle come. This is faith at its highest; to obey until our feet are dipped in the waters and then wait confidently on God. Nor was their trust misplaced. Standing there in the brink

of the impassable flood they saw God's arm made bare. The waters stood up in crystal walls and the people passed through dryshod, into the Land of Promise at last!

But the stones of Gilgal mean more than this; they utter forth an admonition and an exhortation. They recall the past only for the benefit of the future. The memories which they recall are fraught with practical lessons.

Here is a lesson for our Republic. Verily, the Lord hath not dealt so with any people as he hath dealt with us. Not more clearly did he lead Israel by the pillar of cloud than he has led us since the day when our forefathers came hither in quest of freedom to worship God. We call ourselves a Christian nation. Our laws and jurisprudence are founded on the Biblical code of ethics. Our history bears, in every chapter, the red stain of the Gospel. Our President (God bless him!) is a Christian man. The Ark of the Covenant goes before us, as it went before the Children of Israel. In the side of that Ark was the Book of the Law; its golden cover was stained with the blood of sacrifice; and above it rose the Cloud of guidance. Blessed is the nation that is in such a case! We fondly speak of the stars and stripes as "Old Glory"; but the glory of our nation is the banner of the red cross. As long as we are true to our Christian traditions we may rest assured that the divine blessing will be upon us.

There is a lesson here for the Church, also. A great promise is ours: "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth," saith the Lord. "Go ye, therefore, evangelize all nations; and lo, I am with you al-

way, even unto the end of the world." Just there is the test of our faith and courage and obedience. We are sent forth to universal conquest; and God stands covenanted to his Church, as he did to Israel, to give her every portion of ground that the soles of her feet shall tread on; no more and no less. "Christ for the world we sing, the world to Christ we bring!"

But, alas! our feet have scarcely touched the brim of the waters. We hesitate to enter in and possess the land. China is ours by reversion, and Africa and all the regions that lie in darkness and the shadow of death; but the Church must put her feet upon them. How meager is the vanguard which, after nineteen hundred years at school in the wilderness, we are sending forth to the conquest of the world! How can we pray, "Thy kingdom come," until we have done our utmost to accomplish it? God waits to work his great miracle. When the faith and courage and obedience of the Church shall have led her to occupy all coigns of vantage and strategic points of heathendom, he will do the rest. Then will come the sunburst of the Millennium, when every knee shall bow, under the opening heavens, out of which Christ will descend to reign among all nations.

But the lesson comes nearer home. The appeal of the stones at Gilgal is a personal lesson. There are better things in store for us, if we will, than we have ever dreamed of. The Higher Life is before us. It is for us to say whether we will quit the wilderness of sin and sorrow, of squandered possibilities and vain regret, and enter upon a life of grander hope and holier aspiration. If so, we must believe in God.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith."

The Higher Life is a land of giants and fortified cities. To enter it is to set forth upon a campaign of duty and conflict and grave responsibility; but Siloa's Brook is full of the smooth stones of promise; and he who arms himself as David did, will find that naught can stand before him. Great promises are these: "I am the Lord thy God," and "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world," and "I will deliver thee in six troubles; yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee," and "I will never leave thee; I will never, no, never forsake thee." What more can we want? Here is the watchword of faith, "God with us!"

And Courage, too. "I can do all things, through Christ who strengtheneth me." A good life is never an easy life. The pilgrim in the Allegory came to the parting of the ways, where one road, called "Danger," led into the darkness of a forest, and another, called "Destruction," into the fastnesses of a mountain; but there was another path leading upward over a hill called "Difficulty," and this the pilgrim chose, saying:

> "This hill, though high, I covet to ascend;
> The difficulty will not me offend,
> For I perceive the Way to Life lies here."

And then Obedience; absolute, unquestioning obedience. To go step by step, exactly as God indicates, this is the secret of success. There was one man, among those who wandered in the wilderness during the thirty-nine years of discipline, whose patience must have been sorely tried; it was Caleb, the optimist of

the spies, who had said, "We be able!" How he must have longed for the end of those school-days. And when at last the journey was over and the people were gathered about the altar at Gilgal, on being asked what part of the country he would choose for his inheritance, his answer was, "Hebron." Why Hebron? For three reasons: first, because it was a fertile tract of country; second, because it was an historic place, the camping-ground of Abraham; third, because it was the home of the giants. There was Kirjath-Jearim, the capital city of the Anakim. This man Caleb, trained in faith and courage and obedience, longed to be in the very vanguard of conquest. O blessed is he who thus fears nothing, but simply and courageously trusts in God; who longs to take heaven with the wind in his face; who does not shrink from the steep path of difficulty so long as he knows that "the Way to Life lies there." This is the clew to the problem of character and usefulness. This is the lesson of the monument at Gilgal.

JOURNEY XI

IN WHICH THE STRONGEST OF WEAK MEN TAKES THE ROAD TO TIMNATH

THE Children of Israel, on taking possession of the Land of Promise, were placed under the Government of God. This period is known as that of the Theocracy. On occasion men were divinely raised up to deliver the people from their foes: these were called "Judges." We may get a sidelight into this interesting period by glancing at the eventful life of one of these men.

God wanted a man; and, by that unvarying law of demand and supply which is commonly called Providence, the man must be forthcoming.

A man was needed, once on a time, to contribute toward the solution of the problem of human rights; and straightway Stephen Langton appeared with Magna Charta in his hand. A man was needed again to vindicate the freedom of individual conscience; and out of the monastery of Wittenberg he came, unbinding his rosary, and preparing to nail the thunderbolts of the Reformation to the chapel door. So times and men come together by divine ordinance. The clock strikes, and somebody answers, "Here am I!"

At this time the glory had departed from Israel. On every hand were altar-fires in honor of Baal. Up from

the southern plains came the Philistines in their rattling war chariots, devastating the fields and plundering the villages. The banners of God's people were trailed in the dust. The ark of the covenant had been carried away into exile. Was there no arm to save? If man's extremity is God's opportunity, surely the hour had come. Where was the man?

In the house of Manoah at Zorah, just then, a child was born, of whom it was said, "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." He was the child of prophecy. In the name given him, Samson, meaning "Sunshine," there is an intimation of a joyous parental welcome, a divine benediction, and a glorious outlook. If we follow him through the years we shall learn the lesson of Power; its Secret, its Loss, and its Recovery.

1. *The Secret of Power.*

The mission of Samson had been set forth in the annunciation of his birth; to wit, he should "begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines." This was "the reason of his life." There is no life without a reason; though many, failing to discover this, live and die unreasonably. Our power is measured by our loyalty to the divine purpose concerning us.

The lad was set apart from his birth as a Nazirite. The word means "separated." The Nazirites were persons who regarded themselves as divinely called to special tasks, and who shaped their lives accordingly. They were pledged to the putting down of every personal feeling and ambition in the interest of their vow. The badge of this austere brotherhood was

their unshorn hair, which hung over their shoulders in seven braided locks.

The physical strength of Samson was a supernatural gift for a definite end. His sturdy limbs and broad shoulders and muscles like twisted cords were a special equipment for his appointed work. In his youth he met a lion in the way and rent its jaws asunder as if it had been a kid. And this was but an earnest of larger deeds of prowess further on; as when he lifted the gates of Gaza from their hinges and carried them away in grim derision to a neighboring hilltop, laughing back, "See how your bolts and bars restrain me!" Or, as when he met the enemy at Lehi and, single-handed, smote them hip and thigh, rejoicing over the slaughter in a rude alliterative battle-song:

"With the jawbone of an ass,
Heaps upon heaps;
One heap, two heaps;
With the jawbone of an ass
Have I felled a thousand men!"

But his endowment was more than physical; as it is written, "The spirit of the Lord strove with him." What does that mean? Why does God's spirit strive with any man, except to persuade him to address himself to his allotted task? The physical equipment of Samson was practically useless save as it should be used in fulfillment of his vow. His unshorn locks were in evidence of his remembered duty. Let him forget; and he will be weak as other men.

Why are we living? Is it merely to eat and drink and get a little yellow dust together? Or is our life related in some way to the great plan of God?

The success of any life is conditioned on its adjustment to that plan. It is to this end that God's Spirit is ever striving with us. To turn aside from the path divinely marked out is to "grieve the Spirit." To concentrate our energies on the point in view is to meet the law of our being. Where will you find a more caustic satire than in the words of Douglas Jerrold: "I know a man who is master of twenty-four languages, but has nothing to say" ? Or, where will you find a sadder epitaph than on the tomb of Joseph II, at Vienna: "Here lies a King, who, with the best intentions, never succeeded in carrying out a single plan" ?

2. The Loss of Power.

The fall of a soul into moral debility is usually through a process of gradual decline. The sun is eclipsed not by the instant veiling of its brightness; an arc of twilight creeps over its verge, and, encroaching more and more, brings on at last a very blackness of darkness. So is the enfeeblement of a strong man.

It began in Samson's case with certain journeys down to Timnath. He had seen there a woman of the daughters of the Philistines, and was captured by her fair face. His temptations came in at Eye-gate. In vain did his parents remonstrate, "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren?" It was enough for Samson that he desired her. "Get her for me," he cried; "she pleaseth me!"

The beginning of the descent from strength to weakness is in self-will. Our dallying with sin is ever traceable to this, "It pleaseth me."

The road to Timnath is away from consecration,

away from power, away from God. Once and again the strong man made that journey, and always a little further from the serious business of his life. The beguilements of the fair Philistine were at length woven about him like the bands of Gulliver in Lilliput.

The end of self-will is surrender. It is perilous to trifle with diversions and distractions. Our safety is in hewing to the line. We are like the district messenger boy who is sent on an errand post haste. As he turns the corner the bell of a fire engine arrests his steps. A little further on a group of lads are tossing pennies, and he lingers agape with interest, hands in pockets, looking on. Meanwhile his message waits. But who are we that we should make merry at this lad's expense? Are we not also sent on an ambassage, and does not the King's business require haste? Yet here are we in Vanity Fair, charmed with the music and glint of tinkling feet, or mayhap mingling with the self-seeking multitude and losing ourselves in sordid cares. Meanwhile, what of the purpose of life, and what of our message? Behold, the world lieth in darkness, waiting for it!

The story of Samson's fall is full of warning. He laid his head in the lap of the temptress, and rose up shorn of his manly strength. Not all at once, however. Observe how he played with the mystic symbol of his calling. "Tell me," said Delilah, "wherein thy great strength lieth, and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee."

And Samson said, "If they bind me with seven green withes, then shall I be weak as another man."

He slept, and was bound with the green withes; and

she cried, "The Philistines be upon thee!" Then he awoke and brake the withes as tow that is scorched in the fire.

And the temptress said, "Behold, thou hast mocked me. Tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound."

"If I be bound with new ropes that never were used, then shall I be weak as another man."

He slept again, and was bound with new ropes. "The Philistines be upon thee!" she cried. And he brake the ropes like threads from his arms.

And she said, more persuasively still, "Thou hast mocked and deceived me; tell me now wherewith thou mightest be bound."

He approached perilously near his great secret when he answered, "If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web." The moth was fluttering close about the flame.

Again he slept; and his locks were woven in the loom. Then she cried, "The Philistines be upon thee!" and he awoke and, laughing, walked away with the beam and the web.

Then she poutingly urged: "How canst thou say, I love thee? Thy heart is not with me. Thou hast mocked me thrice, and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth." Thus she pressed him daily with her words until his soul was grievously vexed.

Then he told her all: "If I be shaven, my strength will go from me." Once more he slept, and the lords of the Philistines were in waiting. The bird was in the snare. His locks were shorn and his strength

went from him. Again the cry, "The Philistines be upon thee!"

He awoke and said, "I will go out as at other times and shake myself." And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him!

He wist not. Ah, there is the sorrow of it. The most insidious diseases are those which give no pain. Their victims, in the midst of business or pleasure, swoon and are gone. So does a sin indulged creep, like an ambushed assassin, nearer and nearer to the center of life. O, that God would enable some of us to look backward and perceive our unconscious loss of influence! Has the fine edge of our moral sense worn off? Is our conscience, once as sensitive as the palm of an infant's hand, now seared as with a hot iron? These are ominous signs of spiritual declension. We started out at the beginning of our Christian life with a determination to be strong. We coquetted with sin and, behold, we are weak like other men.

3. *The Recovery of Power.*

Blessed be God, all is not lost! The man who has forgotten his vow, forsworn his duty, and denied his Lord, shall yet have an opportunity of grace. "Return unto me, saith the Lord, and I will have mercy upon thee."

In the prison house of Gaza sits the champion of Israel; a captive, grinding like a woman at the mill. His eyes are out. He sits in open view, that the people may make sport of him. The fair women of Philistia pass by and deride him; but he sees them not. Temptation enters no more at Eye-gate. In his enforced soli-

tude he remembers. He recalls the prophecy of his birth: "He shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." He bemoans his wasted strength, his squandered privilege. He is alone in the surging crowd; alone with God. He repents, bitterly repents. His consecration vow is before his blind eyes in letters of fire. O that he might prove himself a Nazirite again before he dies! His enemies have not perceived that his locks are growing. They have grown with the renewal of his vow. His affliction is not in vain; he remembers the riddle he once gave to his enemies: "Out of the eater is come forth meat, and out of the strong is come forth sweetness." Thus in the secret place of penitent sorrow he renews his fealty to God.

The closing scene is pathetic beyond words. The festival of Dagon is at hand. The Philistines are gathering to offer a great sacrifice to their god. The blind giant of Israel is brought into the temple that the assembling multitude may behold him. He bears their mockery in silence; the Spirit of God is again striving with him. His heart is no longer with the past; in this fierce hour he renews his consecration. He will yet, with God's help, "begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines." He hears the footfall and murmur of thousands gathering in the temple. The galleries are full. His hour of triumph has come. He stretches forth his hands, feeling for the great pillars. The muscles of his iron frame are tense and swollen. He lifts his scarred face with its eyeless sockets toward heaven. His lips move; he makes his last prayer, "O God, avenge me!" There is a trembling of the pillars, a momentary hush, then cries of

the fear-stricken and the dying, as with a crash the temple falls, burying in its ruins the blind captive and his persecutors. And from the silence of that ruin forevermore may be heard a voice, "Return from thy backslidings, O Israel, and I will restore thee! Return and I will return unto thee."

Now turn to the eleventh of Hebrews and see the name of Samson recorded in the inspired roll-call of those heroes who "by faith were made strong out of weakness." By this we are given to understand that faith is the measure of power. And what is faith but the vital touch of a soul with God?

It is faith that holds us fast to duty, brings us back from wandering and makes all things possible for us. We are strong only when we are weak; because then the power of God rests upon us.

The beginning of power is when a man finds his mission; when, like Saul of Tarsus, he looks into the face of Jesus and asks, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

The loss of power is when one turns aside from the path of duty to go down to Timnath. He who walks by faith will shun that road. There is a world of wisdom in the cotter's words:

"An' O be sure to fear the Lord alway,
An' mind your duty duly morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore His counsel an' assisting might.
They never seek in vain who seek the Lord aright."

A young Englishman, sixty years ago or thereabouts was moved to carry the gospel to Tierra del

Fuego. The divine call was clear. This was his appointed task; he must accomplish it. He spent his limited fortune in fitting out an expedition; only to be repulsed by the natives and driven back a penniless, unsuccessful but still resolute man. He urged his plea upon the Churches and sailed again. This time he was permitted to land; he pitched his tent among the people, and prepared for work. One by one his companions died, and he was driven by the superstitious natives to the shelter of his boat. In the shadow of a torn sail he lay dying. Not a soul had been given him for his hire. Was his life wasted, then? In his last moments he wrote these words, to be found long afterwards: "My little boat is a very Bethel to my soul. Asleep or awake, I am happier than tongue can tell. I am starving, yet I feel neither hunger nor thirst. I feed on hidden manna and drink at the King's well. I am not disappointed; for I remember this: 'One soweth and another reapeth.'" Was his life a failure? Nay; let the thousands of converts, who go each year, in that faraway country, to water with their tears the grave of Allen Gardiner, pass their verdict upon it. No arrow is wasted that speeds to its mark. No life is futile whose strength is spent in pursuance of a divine call.

JOURNEY XII

IN WHICH A YOUNG MAN, SEARCHING FOR HIS FATHER'S ASSES, FINDS A CROWN

It was no new thing for the Children of Israel to demand a king. At the edge of the Promised Land the Lord forewarned Moses that such a demand would be made, and provision was made to meet it (Deut. 17). None the less on that account was it a sin against God.

The book of the Judges, covering a period of four hundred years, was the best expression ever given in history to the Theocracy, or Commonwealth of God. In this form of government God was supreme; as he said, "I will be your king." The people were represented in two Houses of Parliament; the Upper House, composed of the Princes of the tribes; and the Lower, of the seventy Elders. There was a well-organized and formidable standing army. There was a hierarchy of Priests, who offered sacrifice and served as intermediaries of the people in their communion with God. There was a college of Scribes, whose special function was to interpret the Word. In addition to these, in cases of special emergency, provision was made for champions, known as "Judges," to deliver the people from their foes. It is scarcely possible to think of a wiser or more effective form of gov-

ernment. We may well believe that in the Golden Age the world will return to it.

But the Israelites were not content. They had a mind of their own. They wanted a king, and their reasons were forthcoming: First, for the better administration of justice. Second, for military success; as they said, "Give us a king that he may fight our battles for us." And third, that they "might be like all the nations." In other words, the simplicity of the Theocracy palled upon them. They coveted a court and a retinue, with all the imposing pomp and circumstance of royalty. These were the reasons they gave; but back of everything else lay the fact that they were tired of the authority of God.

As to the result, they were forewarned by Samuel, who said, "If you have a king, he will conscript your sons for military service; he will impose upon you the labor of his fields and vineyards; he will exact taxes and tithes of your herds and flocks; and you shall cry out in that day because of your king, and the Lord will not hear you!" But remonstrance was in vain; they insisted, "Nay; but we will have a king to rule over us!"

It was a wise poet who wrote:

> "We, ignorant of ourselves,
> Beg often our own harms, which the wise Powers
> Deny us for our good. So find we profit
> By losing of our prayers."

But, alas! the "losing of our prayers" is not the worst of it. If we, in our fatuity, keep clamoring like children for "our own harms," they may be granted and

the responsibility will rest on us. This is the Way of the Wilful: "Nay; but we will have a king over us!"

So their desire was granted. God said to Samuel, "Hearken unto their voice. They have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. Give them a king. I brought them up out of Egypt; and they have forsaken me!"

On the hills of Benjamin a young man was wandering with his servant in search of his father's asses, that had gone astray. He was "a choice young man and goodly: there was not in all Israel a goodlier person than he." He passed through Mount Ephraim and the land of Shalisha, on through Shalim and over the borders into the land of Zuph. "Let us return," he then said to his servant, "lest my father be anxious for us." His servant answered, "There is in the city yonder a seer; let us go thither, peradventure he may show us the way." As Saul entered the presence of Samuel he was greeted with the words, "Be not anxious for thy father's asses; they are found. But, behold, the desire of all Israel is unto thee." And the anointing oil was, then and there, poured upon his head.

So runs the tale of Providence. A man goes out to seek his father's asses and finds a crown. And even as he reaches for his crown, he is quite blind to his destiny; not knowing that the Lord is using him as a rod wherewith to scourge his wilful people. At the Coronation, on the heights of Mizpeh, an address was delivered by Samuel in which he solemnly reiterated his admonition: "The Lord brought you up out of the

land of them that oppressed you; and ye have this day rejected him. Ye have said, Nay; but set a king over us." But the people were infatuated; they looked upon the "choice and goodly young man," and all with one accord shouted, "God save the king!"

Is there nothing like this in history? It is the story of the nations from the beginning until now. And the same is true of individual life. The Way of the Wilful is the highway of the children of men.

Observe the *Revolt against Truth.* "Revolt" is the word. I can remember when men shuddered at the bold utterance of Theodore Parker: "I know the doctrine to which you refer is said to be in the Scriptures; but I am not prepared to receive that doctrine on the authority of any such person as God." Yet that is practically the position taken by many, nowadays, who call themselves after the name of Christ. His word is no longer invested by them with ultimate authority.

The question of ultimate authority is the touchstone in all our serious quest of truth. Where shall it be located? We face a trilemma.

First, the final appeal may be to the Scriptures, as an infallible book. This, of course, cannot be allowed if the Scriptures are shown to be contra-rational; though the fact that they are supra-rational affords no serious difficulty to a thoughtful man. "If I could understand God," said Daniel Webster, "I should not believe in him."

The second source and fountain of authority is an infallible Church. Just here we find ourselves facing the great conflict of the Reformation. The Bible was a closed book. The people had access to it only

through the mediation of their priests. Luther demanded the right of personal approach and private interpretation on the part of every man. "Out of the light, Pope and hierarchy," he cried; "you have led us into a region of dense ignorance. We claim the search-warrant of Christ, 'Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and these are they which testify of me!'"

If we reject both the infallible Book and the infallible Church, there is nothing left but the third horn of the trilemma, which is the personal consciousness, or infallible Ego. At this point reason is supreme, and every man becomes his own oracle. Is reason a trustworthy guide? "The spirit of a man is, indeed, the candle of the Lord." But all candles are lighted at the sun. The function of reason is not to make itself an oracle, but to interpret the oracular voices which are addressed to it.

And what is the result? The worst comes to pass; for the very worst that can happen to any man is that he shall have his own way. So Paul writes of certain self-sufficient men of his time: *"And when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man* (which is simply the displacing of the infallible Word by the infallible Ego), *and changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever"* (Rom. 1:21-25). Thus the *philosophoi* became *sophoi: "They were alienated from the love of*

God through the ignorance that was in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph. 4:18). And again, *"Because they receive not the love of the truth, God sendeth them strong delusion that they shall believe a lie"* (2 Thess. 2:10).

We turn to another manifestation of self-will in the *Revolt against the Moral Law.* It has been the custom of God's people from time immemorial to regard the Decalogue as the one perfect ethical symbol. In that symbol the final ground of obedience is placed in the divine sovereignty. Out of the flaming mountain came a Voice, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt and thou shalt not do thus and so." In these days, however, the ultimate and exclusive authority of the Ten Commandments is boldly called in question. And here again we face a trilemma.

In searching for the final ground of moral responsibility we may discover it in the divine edict. This is the position of the great body of the Christian Church, which is still true to "Thus saith the Lord."

Or we may repudiate the divine *ipse dixit* and rest in the *consensus* or agreement of men. This makes the ultimate rule a mere convention. The Ten Commandments are conceded on all sides to be one of the great ethical symbols; but not always to be the only one. Any singular or supernatural inspiration is denied to them. If they be taken in conjunction with the Three Baskets of Buddhism, the Analects of Confucius, the precepts of Marcus Aurelius, and similar rules of conduct, we may possibly, they say, arrive at

some satisfactory moral code. But what is this except an absurd concession to custom and public opinion? It is merely saying, in other words, Let us do as others do.

It remains only to take the third horn of the trilemma, that is Conscience. And here every man becomes a law unto himself, doing that which is right in his own eyes (again the infallible Ego). It is true that conscience was originally intended to be a trustworthy guide, but there is nothing surer or more evident than that sin has fatally deflected it. The German philosopher, Schopenhauer, in his definition of Conscience, makes the following analysis: "It is one-fifth fear of man, one-fifth superstition, one-fifth prejudice, one-fifth vanity, and one-fifth custom." In any case, it is obvious that no man who is merely a conscientious man can by that token be regarded as a good man. For no conscience is wholly right. The conscience of every living man is more or less corrupt by habit, so that the things which once he did with fear and trembling are now done without scruple or compunction; or, if he is moving Godward, his conscience is becoming more tender and his spiritual discriminations clearer. At times conscience is "seared as with a hot iron." Is it ever infallible? Hear the rattling of chains as Saul of Tarsus goes down to Damascus on his bloody errand, thinking verily that he is doing God's service. Hear the clang of the bells of Saint Bartholomew's day ushering in the bloodiest massacre in history; and remember that conscience sounded that tocsin! Hear the cries and groans issuing from the torture-chambers of the Inquisition,

which was the very adytum of the conscience of those days! Thus the darkest deeds of blood and violence in history stand forth to shame the arbitrary reign of conscience in personal conduct.

What is to be done, then, if we are so habitually misled by our perverted moral sense? It must be adjusted to the revealed will of God. The case would be hopeless were no standard given us. We regulate our chronometers by the sun. But what if there were no sun? All mariner's compasses are adjusted to the North Star. But what if there were no North Star? The pound-weights and yard-sticks of our merchants are rectified by the standards in the Patent Office at Washington. But what if there were no standards there or anywhere else?

The result is moral anarchy. Men sweep out of the Theocracy into the reign of Saul. Self-will is made sovereign. And this means a moral break-down. Read the frightful indictment in the first chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans, if you would perceive the logical outcome:

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness . . . who changed the truth of God into a lie. For this cause he gave them up to vile affections, so that they received in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, he gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, de-

ceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

We turn now, to the *Protest against Providence,* that is, the divine control in the affairs of men.

Of all the infidel sayings of Ingersoll none was regarded as more blasphemous than this: "If I had set myself up as a Creator, I should have made a better world than this; and I should certainly make a better job of ruling it." Yet that statement is merely paraphrased in much of the naturalistic philosophy of our time.

A trilemma is again before us. We may choose to be under the constant care and control of God.

Here is the thought of the divine immanence, so conspicuous in the teaching of Christ. He would have his followers live under the Theocracy. He took them out to the hillsides and said, "Consider the lilies of the field; how they grow. Your Father careth for them. How much more shall he care for you?" He taught them to express this sense of the divine nearness in their habit of prayer, saying, "Our Father." The thought of that filial relation was to be the controlling factor in their lives. All things must be regarded as under his providential care and control. His grace, as manifest in the Atonement, is simply the greatest of his special Providences; that is, his interposition to save

us. And prayer is the medium by which the soul of the believer is kept in vital touch with his Father. This is the ideal government, wherein we are in perfect accord with the purposes of God.

If that thought be repudiated, we may, as an alternative, take up with the control of Natural Law.

This makes us creatures of circumstance. We are the product of certain laws, operative in the process of evolution and uninterrupted by any interposition from God or elsewhere. In other words, we are what heredity and environment make us. This is the materialistic view of things which led David Strauss in his last hours to say: "I am caught up in the grip of the immense machine of the Universe, not knowing at what moment I may be destroyed by its revolving wheels and pounding hammers. O, the insufferable abandonment of it!"

But, if not that, what remains? The only alternative is Self-will (again the infallible Ego).

A man is the architect of his own fortune.

> "I care for nobody, no not I,
> And nobody cares for me."

At this point prayer ceases and life become a selfish conflict with the unknown powers that be. If prayer is ever offered, it is like that of the Christian Scientist, addressed to a God whose sole business is physical therapeutics, and with the only purpose of getting all that one possibly can out of him. The soul is under the tyranny of self-will. The emphasis on the filial relation is completely gone. Faith is no more.

And what is the result? The history of Israel from

the beginning of the kingdom is the story of a swift hastening toward doom. It ends like that of Saul himself, who, crowned to discipline the nations, himself followed in the Way of the Wilful and stood before the cave at Endor, crying, "I am sore distressed; for God is departed from me!"

The lesson is Faith. Let us put it in the form of the current evangelistic phrase, "Get right with God." All depends on our being in normal relations with him. It behooves us to remember that he is the Infinite, while our breath is in our nostrils. To dispute his authority, in any matter whatsoever, is to run upon the bosses of his shield. Back of all religion is the tremendous fact that God is a sovereign God. To be "right" with him, we must allow him to save us in his appointed way; that is, by faith in the blood that cleanseth. To be "right" with him we must approach him at the mercy-seat in the filial spirit; mindful of his superior wisdom, knowing and always glad to know that when we have uttered our desires before him, he will (provided we are willing) do that which is wisest and best for us.

The spirit of true prayer is never that of the Israelites in demanding a king. Rather, "Lord, teach us to pray!" The only Man who ever knew how, was the Only-begotten Son. Let us hear him as he agonizes under the olive-trees of Gethsemane. With the purple cup of death at his lips, his trembling flesh cries out, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" And again under the deepening shadow of his impending anguish he cries, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" And then,

in the perfect acquiescence of filial love, he drinks the cup to its bitterest dregs, saying, "O my Father, if it be not possible, thy will be done!" This is prayer. This is being "right with God." This is the just recognition of that authority which rests in infinite Wisdom and Goodness. This is faith, implicit faith:

"I worship thee, sweet will of God,
And all thy ways adore;
And every day I live, I seem
To love thee more and more.

"I have no cares, O blessed Will,
For all my cares are thine;
I live in triumph, Lord; for thou
Hast made thy triumphs mine.

"Ill that God blesses is our good,
And unblest good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be his sweet will."

JOURNEY XIII

IN WHICH ARE TRACED THE WANDERINGS OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT

THE Ark of the Covenant was a mere wooden chest, five feet long and half as wide, but what a tremendous interest centered in it! It was constructed after a divine plan. The artisan Bezaleel was instructed to copy, in every minutest detail and particular, the "pattern shown in the Mount." When finished, it was placed in a remote chamber of the Tabernacle, called "the Holy of Holies," where no man was permitted to lay hands or eyes upon it, save once a year on "the Great Day of Atonement." On that day the High Priest drew aside the fine-twined curtain and entered in; but "not without blood"—blood from the brazen altar of sacrifice, which was sprinkled on the golden cover of the Ark.

Why should this simple chest be secluded with such jealous care? Why should it be compassed about with so many guards and warnings and minute prescriptions? And why should such tragedies attend it? "The Ark," says Dr. Parker, "was the transient symbol of an eternal truth"; and he falls in with the common opinion that this "eternal truth" was the presence of God. But the meaning of the Ark goes deeper than this. It was the vital heart and center of the whole elaborate cult of rites and ceremonies under

the Old Economy. The sacred times, places, persons, and observances all converged here. It did, indeed, symbolize the divine presence; but that Presence was Christ. For in the Old Economy as in the New, there was no theophany or personal manifestation of God except as he was manifest in Christ as "the Angel of the Covenant," who was called Immanuel, "God with us." The Incarnation is the stooping of God to bring himself within the apprehension of men. But for this the finite could never grasp the Infinite at all. No man can see God and live. It is doubtful if we shall ever behold him except as we look on the face of the God-man.

The meaning of the Ark, with a full explanation of the interest gathering about it, is given in its name. It was "the Ark of the Covenant." The one differentiating fact by which the Children of Israel were called out of the world to be "a peculiar people," was the fact that they were in covenant with God. The sum and substance of that Covenant was the Messianic trust reposed in the hands of Israel; as Paul says, "What advantage then hath the Jew? Much every way; chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." And the significance of these Oracles was the promise that in the fullness of time the Messiah would come to deliver the world from sin. This was "the Hope of Israel." The chosen people were required to keep that hope and pass it on to the coming ages.

The Messianic hope was enshrined in the ceremonial system of the Jews. Not only their prophecies, but all their rites and ceremonies pointed forward as

object-lessons to the coming of Christ. The terms of the Covenant were that if the Children of Israel would be true, as the depositary of that hope, there should be no end to their national life. If not, the candlestick should be removed out of its place; that is, they should cease to be a nation and no longer enjoy the special favor of God.

At this remove from the Old Economy it is difficult for us to realize the immense emphasis which was placed on the minute particulars of this system of rites and ceremonies. It passed away at the advent of Christ, as shadows vanish before the rising sun. "He took away the handwriting of ordinances which was against us and nailed it to his cross." If we then would understand the significance of this Ark of the Covenant, as the center of that system, we must view it from the standpoint of those who were still in the dim region of type and symbol, to whom truth must in the necessity of the case be revealed in object-lessons, after the kindergarten method; and we must continually bear in mind the fact that everything is pointing forward and crying, "Behold, he cometh!"

The Ark was made of acacia wood, overlaid within and without with gold; illustrating, if not typifying, the dual nature of Christ, in whom Deity and humanity are mystically united.

It originally contained three things: Aaron's budded Rod, the pot of Manna, and the tables of the Law. In the budded Rod is set forth the fact that life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel of Christ; as he said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me shall never die." The pot of Manna

symbolizes Christ as our spiritual sustenance; as he said, "Your Fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead; I am that bread which came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall never die." The tables of the Law signified that Christ hath fulfilled all righteousness, and that he is the end of the Law for righteousness to all who believe in him.

The golden cover of the Ark, called "the mercy-seat," was sprinkled with blood, signifying that our only approach to God is through the atoning grace of Christ, whose blood cleanseth from all sin.

The cherubim, who bent over the Ark with lowered eyes, in an attitude of wonder, call to mind the mystery of the Incarnation; as it is written, "Great is the mystery of godliness, God is manifest in flesh—the angels desire to look into it!"

The cloud that rose from between the wings of the cherubim was the mysterious Shekinah, the "pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night," the visible token of the divine presence and guidance; as Christ said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The Ark, thus significant of the one fact that made Israel a peculiar people, was vitally and tragically associated with their history for a thousand years.

The story begins at Mount Sinai. Up to that time all events connected with the life of that people had been preparatory. At Sinai the nation was born; receiving its Constitution and By-laws, in the moral and ceremonial law. Then and there the Covenant was formally confirmed and emphasized. The Hope of Israel was crystallized in precept and ordinance. The

sacred rites and symbols were codified; and the Ark of the Covenant, which was the heart and nucleus of them all, was made "after the pattern shown in the Mount."

In the forty years in the wilderness the Ark occupied the central place. At the lifting of the cloud, the cry was heard, "Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered!" The journey was resumed and the Ark of the Covenant led the way. When the cloud paused, the cry was raised, "Return, O Lord, unto the thousands of Israel!" the camp was pitched, and the Ark rested again in the Holiest of All.

At the close of the forty years, when the people marched through Jordan, the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the bed of the river as the palladium of their safety; and the spot was marked by an altar of twelve stones; a memorial of the faithfulness of a covenant-keeping God.

In the settlement of the Promised Land the Ark was set up in the Tabernacle at Shiloh, where it remained for a period of about four hundred years; that is, during the time of the Judges, the Golden Age of Israel, the Commonwealth of God.

At the battle of Aphek when the Philistines set themselves in formidable array against Israel, the Ark was resorted to as a fetich. It was brought into the midst of the battle, was captured, and carried away by the enemy. The aged Eli sat by the gate of Shiloh awaiting the issue. A messenger came, saying, "Israel is fled before the Philistines! There hath been a great slaughter. Thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead; and the Ark of God is taken!" And it

came to pass that "when he made mention of the Ark, Eli fell backward and died."

The Philistines placed the Ark in their temple at Ashdod; and lo, Dagon fell upon his face before it! They carried it away to Gath, thence to Ekron, and thence to Beth-shemesh; and wherever it went the pestilence followed in its train and a cry of sorrow went up. At length it was placed in the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-jearim; where it remained for a period of seventy years, during which the Children of Israel seem to have entirely forgotten it.

Then David came to the throne, the "man after God's own heart." Not being permitted to build the Temple, he bethought him of the Ark. He would bring it up from its exile and place it again in the Tabernacle; and this should be done with becoming pomp and circumstance. The body-guard, the choirs and orchestras, the procession of priests and Levites were provided. An ode was written for the occasion (Psalm 24). Then a grave mistake was made; the Ark was placed upon a new cart and the two sons of Abinadab took charge of it. The requirement that it should be carried only on the shoulders of the Levites had probably passed out of mind. As the cart moved upward along the rough mountain road the Ark trembled, and Uzzah put forth his hand to steady it; and "God smote him that he died!" It would be superserviceable for me at this point to make an apology for the divine justice; let it suffice to say that the exemplary punishment of Uzzah placed a singular emphasis upon the importance of observing the letter of the divine law.

For the time, David was affrighted and apparently resentful, saying, "How then shall I bring the Ark of the Covenant unto me?" He abandoned his purpose, temporarily, and the Ark found shelter in the house of Obed-edom, the Gittite. O blessed house of Obed-edom, marked by this symbol of grace! Blessed is every home where Christ stands in the doorway, lifting his hands and saying, "Peace be within this house"! Three months later, David returned for the Ark; it was raised on the shoulders of Levites and carried in solemn procession over the hills. There were singing and sacrifice and feasting when it was placed within the Tabernacle and rested again in the Holiest of All.

At the completion of the Temple by Solomon, the Ark was removed thither. That was a great day. On his ivory throne sat "Solomon in all his glory." The procession of priests and Levites drew near, and while they climbed the great stairway the choirs sang responsively, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!" As the Ark was borne into the Holy of Holies, the great curtain fell behind it; and lo! the mysterious cloud came from within and hovered over the people, so that a great silence fell upon all. And there, in the Temple, the Ark remained for three hundred years.

In the time of the wicked King Manasseh, it was removed to make way for the image of an unclean goddess. But when Josiah came to the throne, it was recovered from a storeroom of the Temple and restored to its place, where it remained until the Cap-

tivity. Then, after being so closely associated with the history of Israel for a thousand years, it mysteriously disappeared. Perhaps it was burned by the King of Babylon when he destroyed the Temple. Perhaps it was carried away to grace his triumph. In any case, it was never heard of again; and with its loss the glory departed from Israel.

The people having proven false to their covenant, the Ark had no longer any significance. They had failed to cherish "the Hope of Israel"; and the admonition of the prophets came true, they were "scattered and peeled." To-day the Jews are a people without a country, a nation without a government, a church without a visible token of the presence of God.

But the Ark is not lost. The shadow is gone, but the substance remains. The Covenant is broken, but the truth abides forever. John the Evangelist, at the sound of the seventh trumpet announcing the consummation of all things, heard a cry, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever!" Then he saw the Temple of God opened in heaven, and, behold, "the Ark of the Covenant was there." The sacrament of the abiding presence of Christ has not passed into oblivion. The word of the Lord is Yea and Amen. Thrones may totter, empires rise and pass away, but Christ abideth "yesterday, to-day and forever the same."

Here is a lesson for the people of our Republic to take to heart. Our national life is bound up with the destinies of our Ark. We call ourselves a Christian nation. The man who discovered this continent

planted the red cross banner on its shores and christened it "San Salvador." We are a Christian nation as was Israel of old. Their covenant is our covenant. While they as a people were true to their Messianic trust, the Lord was the girdle of their strength. Their doom is our admonition. "O Jerusalem! How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not; and now, behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Our lifetime as a nation will be measured by our loyalty to Christ.

And here is a lesson, also, for the Church. Its strength is in its covenant. "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ our Lord." All else is of comparatively little moment so long as the Church remains loyal to him. But loyalty to Christ means devotion to him as Priest and Prophet and King. It means the receiving of the last atom of his teaching without demur or hesitation. It means a cordial recognition of his final authority in all matters pertaining to the conduct of life. It means obedience to his great commission, "Go ye into all the world and evangelize." These are the terms of our covenant with him. To break that Covenant is to lose our right and title to the Ark as the symbol of his presence with us.

And, finally, here is a lesson for us individually. The Christian life is merely a personal relation with Christ. The Christian is in covenant with Christ. To say that a man is a Christian because, in general terms, he seems to live the sort of life which Jesus lived among men, is not going far enough. No man is a Christian who has not willed to be Christ's, passing

under his yoke in complete subjugation, and making an entire and unconditional surrender to him. "Christianity is a life"; it is a life lived in pursuance of the behest of Christ; in sympathy with all his teachings as to doctrine and ethics and every other way. One of the Fathers wrote, "We who are Christians are branded in the ear and the foot; as the Master said, My sheep hear my voice and they follow me." To be a Christian means far more than is generally allowed in these piping days of "broad-gauge" piety. Let us exalt the Covenant; for in that Covenant is the gist of the whole matter. It sets forth the mystical union of the believer with Christ. "He is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification." He is our Alpha, the beginning of every purpose and aspiration; and he is our Omega, the end of every hope and ambition. Let us get back to the Covenant. Back to Christ! He is our first, our last, our midst, our all in all.

JOURNEY XIV

IN WHICH AN INQUISITIVE WOMAN GOES A LONG WAY TO TEST THE WISDOM OF A FOOLISH WISE MAN

THE name of the Queen of Sheba, as given in the traditions of the Moslems, was Balkis. She ruled in Arabia-Felix, or "Araby the Blest." It was the land of gold and spices, of luxury and happiness. Herodotus says, "The country exhaled sweetness"; and Diodorus, "Its perfume extended far out to sea."

But the queen of this happy land was not happy. She was possessed of a consuming desire to find out "the reason of things"; and surely this was a noble ambition. It is this that differentiates us from the lower orders of life. The dawning in the eyes of a child is a look of inquiry; and the older we grow the more we wonder. Did you never stand on a clear night, gazing up at the stars and through the interstellar spaces, vexing your soul with the question, "What lies beyond?" There are multitudes of problems which baffle us; and John Locke was right when he said, "If we do not ask we shall never find out." Curiosity is the key of knowledge; knowledge is power; power is influence; and influence is life. All truth is of value; but that wisdom which gets hold of the great verities of the spiritual world is the principal thing. It is safe to say that, whatever else the Queen

of Sheba wanted to know, the deepest longing of her soul had to do with the problems of the eternal life.

But where should she go to find out? Was there anywhere a philosopher who could answer her "hard questions"? She had heard of Solomon, the king of an obscure province in a remote corner of the world, who was reputed to be "the wisest of men." She determined to visit him. This was no small undertaking, for it involved a journey of about fifteen hundred miles. To go and return would require the larger part of a year. But she left the luxurious life of her palace and set out upon the dangers and hardships of desert and mountain in the quest of knowledge.

In due time, attended by an imposing retinue, she arrived at her destination. The meeting of these dignitaries was a notable event; the most magnificent of kings and the queen of Araby the Blest; the wisest of men and the most inquisitive of women; the man who was reputed to know everything and the woman who wanted to know. She came with "a very great train"; her camels laden with gold and spices and rare commodities of the Orient. She presented Solomon with ten thousand talents of silver; no doubt he responded with a commensurate gift; and there were bowings and genuflections and elaborate exchanges of royal courtesy.

But all this pomp and circumstance was aside from the matter in hand. The "hard questions" which she had pondered long were throbbing to her lips.

In the province of Science she would find him a ready respondent. He was familiar with the habits of birds and beasts and creeping things; and he "spake

of trees, from the cedar which is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop which springeth out of the wall." He was a scientist far in advance of his time. It would appear, for example, from his reference to the breaking of "the pitcher at the fountain and of the wheel at the cistern" that he anticipated by some thousands of years the discovery of the circulation of the blood.

Did her curiosity lead her to test his literary ability? He was the Shakespeare of his age. He "spake three thousand proverbs and his songs were a thousand and five." The Book of Canticles is the most perfect epithalamium ever written; and Ecclesiastes is unrivaled as a dramatic monologue. The poets of the centuries have sung their songs of the springtime, but never like this:

"My beloved spake, and said unto me,
Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away!
For, lo, the winter is past,
The rain is over and gone:
The flowers appear on the earth;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land;
The fig-tree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines are in blossom,
They give forth their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away!"

Or would she test his acquaintance with industrial economics? He was the merchant-prince of his time. At the docks of Joppa, the seaport of his kingdom, were ships from Tyre and distant Spain and Ophir, "bringing gold and silver and ivory, apes and peacocks"; and at the famous shipyard of Ezion-Geber were other vessels on the ways. The caravan routes

over the plains and mountains were lined with trains of camels and dromedaries, laden with the commodities of remote lands. He had "horses brought out of Egypt and linen yarn." By the traffic of his merchants he was enriched beyond all kings that were before him.

Or would she test his wisdom in the realm of practical politics? He was the greatest of diplomats and statesmen. In one way or another he had formed alliances with Egypt and Syro-Phœnicia and other nations, in the interest of peace. He was called Shelomith, "the Prince of Peace." It was a proverb that during his reign "every man sat under his own vine and fig-tree." He practiced the precept, "In time of peace prepare for war." Along the borders of his empire stretched a chain of formidable castles. He had a standing army of fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand cavalry, besides a multitude of footmen. The wisdom of his foreign policy was equaled by his sagacious attention to internal affairs. He divided his kingdom into twelve districts, and kept his people constantly employed in the erection of public works. His palace was called "The Golden House." The Queen of Sheba, no doubt, saw him there, seated on his throne of ivory, with twelve great lions on either side, and his guard in magnificent apparel about him. He justified the phrase, "Solomon in all his glory." One of his royal homes, called "The House of the Forest of Lebanon," was built of cedar overlaid with gold. One of his fortresses, called "The Tower of David," had a thousand golden shields suspended on its battlements. Great public improvements were

multiplied on every hand. A system of aqueducts was constructed, the first ever known, some of which are in use even to this day.

Did she question him as to his conception of God? He was a theologian. Was not his Temple in evidence? He showed her its gilded dome, its two great pillars, Jachin and Boaz, its marble courts, the great quadrangle with the cloister known as "Solomon's Porch." He doubtless told her that a hundred and eighty-three thousand workmen had been employed for seven years in building it. He led her up the great marble stairway, and "she marveled at the ascent by which he went up into the House of the Lord, so that there was no more spirit in her."

But when she came to the question which, above all else, had been vexing her soul, he could not answer it. At the point of practical religion his wisdom failed him. His prayer at Gibeon had been for "wisdom to govern so great a people"; and this had been abundantly given him. He knew God only as the great Commissary who supplied his royal needs. As to the effect of that wisdom on his moral life and character, his visitor must draw her own conclusions. He might speak as he pleased about God; she, having her eyes about her, could not but observe that his theology had not made him a good man. She saw that he had increased his revenues by the taxing of his people and provinces, until he "surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches." She saw his vast resources of pleasure, his harem, his choirs of singing men and singing women, his "ivory and apes and peacocks." She placed his overweening pride and ambi-

tion over against his scandalous disregard of the stern behests of duty. In the scroll of Ecclesiastes which he had given her, she read the monologue of a man who had traversed the whole circumference of human experience and reached the conclusion that "the fear of God, this is wisdom; and to keep his commandments, this is understanding"; but in the life and conduct of Solomon she saw no counterpart of that maxim nor any evidence of the fear of God.

So she "turned and went away to her own land, she and her servants." Disappointed! She had questioned him in the minor realms of knowledge and his cleverness amazed her; but when she propounded the deep questions of the soul, as to sin and its remedy, the obligations of duty, the deep secret of character, and the deeper secret of the life beyond, he had naught to say, or if he spoke, his life spoke louder than his words. It was difficult indeed to engage his thought on these important problems; his mind ever reverting to sordid things. He had great stores of knowledge; but, alas! they were devoted to base and selfish uses.

A thousand years later a Man of the people stood in Solomon's Porch with the people gathered about him. He was a peasant of Nazareth, with little or none of the wisdom of the schools, yet they said of him, "Never man spake like this man!" He solved the problems which Solomon could not solve, he discoursed on the things of eternity and answered the question of life. He spoke of the lilies of the field and of the fowls of the air, but in no scientific way. He made no contributions to literature; never wrote a line so far as we know, except on one occasion, when

the rabbis dragged a guilty woman into his presence and demanded how he would deal with her; then he wrote on the dust of the cloister floor, "Let him that is without sin first cast a stone at her." He made but a single contribution to the science of industrial economics, and that in one sentence, which was destined to determine the relations of labor and capital for all time; to wit, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." In the sphere of politics he made only one deliverance, but that covered all; namely, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Nor did he formulate any system of theology; he assumed God as the postulate of truth.

He held himself rigidly to the philosophy of life. The three great truths which he preached were those which all, in common with the Queen of the South, desire to know. As to man, he taught that, made in God's likeness, he has fallen from his high estate through sin. As to God, he taught that his great desire is to save man. And the gospel which he preached was "the gospel of reconciliation." He affirmed that he was himself the Son of God, who came forth to suffer and die vicariously, so that whosoever would believe in him might be reconciled with God. It is said of Thebes that it had a thousand gates; but his city, the New Jerusalem, has only one. Christ said, "I am the door—he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him."

This is his answer to the universal query, "How shall God be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly?" and "How shall a sinful man be just with God?"

Were the people interested? Did they show the same solicitude that brought Balkis over the desert and mountains? Nay; dull, stolid, indifferent, they would not heed him. "He came unto his own and his own received him not." The religious leaders derided him, and the people clamored for the death of this great Teacher who pointed out the way of everlasting life. He stretched out his hands to them in vain. He pleaded with them: "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life!" They did not care. They did not want to know. It was under such circumstances that he said, "The Queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here!"

And he is still here. The "greater than Solomon" is ever with us. "We may not climb the heavenly steeps to bring the Lord Christ down." His wisdom is the wonder of the world. Men are ever saying, "The half was never told." Yet they go about the streets chasing the yellow dust and the thistledown of life, and heeding him not. How the Queen of the South puts such indifference to shame! The light of the world is here and men prefer to walk in darkness. The solution of the problem of life is at hand and they would rather worship the Sphinx. The heavens are open; and they, "forever hastening to the grave, stoop downward as they run." Out of the open heavens comes a voice, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye him!" and they say, "Behold, it thundereth!"

"Yet some there be that, by due steps, aspire
To lay their just hand on the golden key,
That opes the palace of eternity;"

and for these the wisdom whose price is above rubies is offered in the gospel of Christ. By faith in him they pass through the door into the great temple of truth and righteousness. To hear and follow him is life eternal. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

JOURNEY XV

IN WHICH JEROBOAM, TO HIS SORROW, IS RECALLED FROM EXILE

In reading the chronicles of the Kings of Israel we frequently come upon the name of Jeroboam, and it is almost always characterized in this manner, "Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." This is repeated no less than eighteen times with weary reiteration. Think of a man standing in the pillory three thousand years with that placard over him! Why is he thus branded and dishonored? What did he do to deserve it?

He was a Jew; a widow's son, distinguished as a civil engineer. He had begun at the foot of the ladder, lending a hand with pick and shovel in the repairing of the fortifications of Millo. The eyes of King Solomon fell upon the tall, broad-shouldered youth, and, admiring his industry and cleverness, he promoted him step by step until he was made Superintendent of Public Works and placed in charge of thirty thousand men. His ambition grew with his advancement; and thus, at length, temptation overcame him. He was like many others of whom we say, "They cannot bear prosperity." At this time in Israel there was much mourning among the people, owing to royal luxury and extravagance and to excessive taxes and governmental impositions. The

young engineer was approached by the malcontents and became involved in a conspiracy. Solomon got wind of it; the conspiracy collapsed; and Jeroboam fled to Egypt, where he was now living in impatient exile.

At the death of Solomon the smouldering fire burst into a flame. His son, Rehoboam, refused to listen to the complaints of the people, saying, "My father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." The Ten Tribes assembled and resolved on secession. The cry was raised, "To your tents, O Israel!" And we should be the last to find fault with them, since the state of affairs was much what it was in the Colonies when our forefathers came together in Independence Hall and drew up a notable protest beginning, "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another," etc. When the question arose as to who should be the leader of the Ten Tribes, all eyes turned to Egypt; and Jeroboam was sent for.

He had longed for that message and now hastened to answer it. He was probably not more than a fortnight on the way. The Israelites had consumed forty years in the same journey, when they came up "out of the house of their bondage"; but Jeroboam's feet were winged with ambition as theirs were not. What dreams and visions stimulated him! He ran to meet his destiny. A crown danced before his eyes.

He met the assembled people at Shechem and was formally inaugurated. Never was sweeter sound than that which greeted the ambitious youth, "God

save the king!" His hopes were realized at last. What an opportunity was now before him! What an outlook; if only he would govern in the fear of God.

But, alas! he began in the wrong way. Thinking only of personal advancement he left God out of the reckoning. That was a desperate blunder. His reign of two and twenty years is briefly summed up in three sins; all of them due to what Spenser calls "the sacred hunger of an ambitious minde."

His first sin was against God, in setting up the golden calves.

From the standpoint of a godless king this was a good policy. He reasoned thus: "The law requires that the people shall go to Jerusalem to attend the three annual festivals. If they do this, it is only a question of time when they return to their former allegiance. We must, therefore, have our own centers of worship; and where better than at Dan in the North and Bethel in the South, both places consecrated by sacred associations? As we cannot have the Ark of the Covenant we must devise some other visible symbol of the presence of God. And what better than two golden calves, with faces like those of the mystical figures over the Ark?"

The shrines were dedicated accordingly, and the royal proclamation went forth, "These be your gods, O Israel!"

From the standpoint of mere statecraft this may have been "good policy"; but it was bad religion. Any form of idolatry is offensive to God. It is not necessary to set up a golden calf. We may make an idol

of wealth or pleasure or honor. We may frame an idol out of our imagination. All gods are false, except the One who has revealed himself in his word as the true God. And anything is an idol which is served or honored more than we serve and honor him.

The second sin of Jeroboam was against himself.

He was warned twice, but refused to give heed. On one occasion, as he ministered at the altar, presuming to burn incense there, an unknown and unnamed prophet stood beside him, crying, "O altar, altar! Thus saith the Lord: A child shall be born, who shall destroy the priests of the high places and burn men's bones upon thee!" And when Jeroboam stretched forth his hand and cried, "Lay hold upon him!" his hand was palsied, so that he must needs entreat the Lord to restore it.

On another occasion his son, the heir-apparent, being desperately ill, the king, knowing the futility of praying to the golden calves, sent his wife in disguise to the prophet at Shiloh. As she approached the prophet's door he cried, "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam! Why feignest thou thyself to be another? I have heavy tidings for thee. Go tell Jeroboam, Thou hast done evil; therefore, I will bring evil upon thy house, for the Lord hath spoken it!"

All warnings were lost upon this man. He was like a sailor who refuses to heed the beacons on a dangerous shore. God did the best he could for him, as he does for every sinner. He warns, promises, entreats in vain. He sends blessings innumerable, then chastisements, sorrow, adversity to no purpose. Be-

ing wedded to their sins, and blind to self-interest, they "run upon the bosses of the shield of God."

The third sin of this man was against the people.

His influence was like the deadly upas tree; and they sat under it. He "made Israel to sin." He issued a proclamation requiring them to bow at the idolatrous shrines; and, during all the subsequent history of the Ten Tribes, that baneful shadow was over them. They had nineteen kings, before they were led away into exile, and there was not a godly man among them. One after another they took their places in the pillory beside him, being stigmatized on this wise, "he forgat God and followed in the steps of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin."

But why do we have the record of these sins? Would it not have been kinder to pass over them in silence? In the Assembly Hall of the Military Academy at West Point you may see the portraits of the various captains who have commanded there. One place, however, is left blank; it is the place that should have been occupied by Benedict Arnold, the traitor. The picture of Jeroboam might, in like manner, have been turned to the wall, but for the fact that the reiteration of his sin carries a great lesson with it, namely *the perpetuity of influence.* "No man liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself."

There are *two kinds of influence. The first is voluntary.*

Jeroboam's sins were not inadvertent; he meant to have the people worship the golden calves. He did

wrong, and misled others deliberately. There are many who do likewise; thieves, rum-sellers, dive-keepers, managers of Sunday theaters, purveyors of unclean literature, and authors of infidel books; these do evil with malice aforethought. Not content with ruining themselves, they plan to ruin the unwary. To all such the word of the Master applies: "It must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

But there are multitudes, also, who do good, and intend to do it. The world is full of them; teachers of truth, "sisters of mercy," life-savers, and philanthropists, who speak the seasonable word which is like apples of gold in baskets of silver, and who eagerly stretch forth the helping hand. To such the word of the Master applies: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

The other kind of influence is automatic.

And this is by far the largest force in life. For influence does not wait to be exerted, it exerts itself whether we will or not. I used to go fishing for trout in a clear stream among the Pocono Hills; but when I was last there the waters were dull and dark, and my errand was vain. The man who had built a paper mill up above did not mean to kill the fish; nevertheless he had effectually accomplished it.

John Mills, who translated Chambers' Encyclopedia into French in 1743, was moved by no worse motive than that of personal gain. But when, with that end

in view, he enlisted the services of Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and others of that infidel group, he set in operation forces which fifty years later brought on the Reign of Terror, and drenched Paris with blood. It is thus that men do evil without intending it.

And good is done in the same way. Peter was probably not aware that there was virtue in his shadow. My first Sunday-school teacher did not dream that his example would abide with me through the years like a guiding star. Seneca said, "The people learn more from the manners of Socrates than from his philosophy." When the statue of George Peabody was unveiled in London, the sculptor, Story, was invited to speak. Having no gift of eloquence, he pointed twice to the statue, saying, "That is my speech!" Who shall measure the influence of the Christian mothers who, all over the world, are teaching their children the precepts of the gospel, and, better still, living the simple Christian life before them? A deaf mute, who habitually attended church, wrote to his pastor in a despondent mood, "I can do nothing for Christ"; to which the minister replied, "By the silent force of your example you are bringing people within the hearing of the gospel. You are my right-hand man."

It remains to be said that *influence of either kind is immortal.*

A man who had lived an evil life said on his death-bed, "I wish you could gather up my influence and bury it with me." That could not be. His body might lie in the sepulchre, and his name be forgotten;

but "the evil a man does lives after him." Of all the kings that followed Jeroboam, not one was so alive as Jeroboam himself, though he had been "gathered unto his fathers"; for through Nadab and Baasha and Elah and Zimri, and the others he was still "making Israel to sin."

And the influence of right-living men is likewise immortal: "they do rest from their labors, but their works do follow them." The odor of the spikenard with which an unknown woman once anointed the feet of Jesus has come down through the centuries; her deed being told "as a memorial of her." So the dead are really the living. We are guided by the memory of those whom we have "loved and lost awhile." Goodness is proof "'gainst the tooth of time and rasure of oblivion."

If a fixed star were to be extinguished in the distant heavens it would be a million years before the people of this world would discover it. Its beams would still be shining on.

> "So when a good man dies,
> For years beyond our ken
> The light he leaves behind him lies
> Upon the paths of men."

The lesson is plain. Let us look to our influence! But how? The secret of doing good is being good. Can men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? "A good man out of the treasure of his heart bringeth forth good fruit." Our influence is never better than our character; and character has its seat and center in the heart.

If we would set ourselves right in this matter, the

first thing to do is to come to Christ, that we may rid ourselves of sin; and all the rest is following him; that is, believing his teaching, doing his work, and striving to be like him. See to your character, and your influence is sure. Light cannot help shining. It sounds no trumpets, waves no banners, makes no announcement of its coming, but just comes. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify God.

"O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead, who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues."

JOURNEY XVI

IN WHICH ELIJAH GOES BRAVELY TO THE BATTLE OF THE GODS

In the heights of Gilead, to the east of the Jordan, the prophet had spent three weary years. A price was on his head. He had fled from the wrath of Ahab and his fierce consort, and was glad of the shelter of these lonely hills.

But the hour for action was at hand. The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, "Arise and go!" For this man, to hear was to obey. He was naturally a timid man, and he knew the dangers before him; but, relying on the God who had never yet failed him, he girt his sheepskin coat about him, grasped his staff firmly, and set out to beard the lion in his den.

A day's journey along the mountain paths, brought him to the valley of the Jordan, where he found himself amid the horrors of famine. For three frightful years there had been no rain nor dew. In the parched fields the lean cattle went lowing for water in vain. As he passed through the villages he marked the gaunt faces of the famishing people, and saw the dead lying unburied in the streets. It was a sad journey even for a stern messenger of justice. Did he ask, "Is it right that a whole people should suffer in this manner for their sovereign's sin?" The answer was at hand. What were these altars by the wayside where worship-

ers knelt, crying, "O Baal, hear us"? And why were all the hilltops crowned with groves devoted to the worship of the unclean Ashtoreth? There were signs of apostasy on every hand. The people had departed from God!

The lone prophet journeyed on, saluting no man by the way, nor pausing at the voice of suffering and sorrow, until he reached the palace at Samaria. The king greeted him angrily, "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" His answer was equally abrupt: "I have not troubled Israel; but thou and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the Lord." And without further ceremony he proceeded to the matter in hand. He had come to propose a challenge: "Call the people together at Mount Carmel. Let there be two altars; one for Baal and one for Jehovah; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God!"

His next appeal was to the assembled people: "How long halt ye between two opinions? If Jehovah be God, follow him; and if Baal, then follow him." And they answered him not a word. Then the challenge again: "I only remain a prophet of Jehovah; but the prophets of Baal are four hundred and fifty. Let us have two altars, and a bullock on each. The prophets of Baal shall call upon his name, and I will call upon the name of Jehovah; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God!" The fairness of the proposition was obvious; the people answered, "It is well spoken."

The last appeal was to the priests themselves: "Lay your bullock on the altar, but kindle no fire beneath it; make your prayer, and I will make mine; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God!"

The day was at hand. The people were assembled on Carmel to witness the ordeal. To the westward the morning mists were rising from the Mediterranean; on the east lay the historic battlefield of Esdraelon, where once and again the cry had been heard, "To the help of the Lord against the mighty!" The sword of the Lord and of Gideon had there prevailed against the Midianites. The stars in their courses had there fought against Sisera. But never was battle like this; the Battle of the Gods. Eight hundred and fifty priests of the royal religion—including four hundred priests of the goddess Ashtoreth—encircled the altar on which the bullock had been laid, and made their prayer, from morning until noon, "O Baal, hear!" Meanwhile, Elijah mocked them, "Cry aloud, for he is a god! He is talking, or pursuing, or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth!" But there was no voice, nor answer, nor any that regarded. At the hour of the evening sacrifice the lone prophet stood beside his altar and calmly made his prayer: "God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God! Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art God!" Was there any now that regarded? Lo, yonder in the twilight sky a falling fleece of fire! In awestruck silence the people saw it descending lower and lower, until it touched the sacrifice and consumed it. The logic of the argument was irresistible. The people cried with one accord, "The Lord he is God! The Lord he is God!"

Is there any parallel in history? O yes; a parallel of such convincing power that it quite eclipses the stu-

pendous logic of that controversy on Carmel. We must needs go to Calvary if we would behold the great battle of the gods.

Up in the sparsely settled regions of Galilee, dwelt the Prophet of Nazareth; he, too, sought shelter from persecution. A price was on his head. The three years of his ministry were over, and the hour had come when he must confront the powers that be. He set out for Jerusalem by the caravan route through Peræa. It was an historic journey. The shadow of the cross was over him. He knew all that awaited him; yet, with the heroism of an absolute self-sacrifice, "he set his face steadfastly to go." Did he see famine and apostasy along the way? Aye; such spiritual declension as the world had never seen, and an utter famine of the Word. On reaching Jerusalem he confronted the wrath of Cæsar, and stretched out his hands to the people, saying, "If the Lord be God, why do ye not follow him?" He came to a close grapple with the priests of the Establishment, saying, "Woe unto you, mask-wearers! How shall ye escape the damnation of hell?" He made his challenge; and they accepted it. The controversy was at Golgotha. He was at once the ministering priest and the sacrifice upon the altar. He made his last prayer with his hands outstretched on the cross; and the descending fire consumed him as a whole burnt-offering for the world's sin.

But where were the answering cries of approval? Silence! The people dispersed, and the shadows of night gathered about the Cross. In the distance stood a group of fear-stricken disciples, saying to one an-

other, "We hoped that it had been he who should have delivered Israel!" A few women sobbed their hopeless grief: and that was all.

But wait until the seal of resurrection is put upon that miracle, and you shall hear a voice, ever and anon, saying, "The Lord he is God!" And there will be other voices as the years and centuries pass on until the world will ring with it. By the power of truth, by the triumph of righteousness, by the logic of events, by the philosophy of history, by the blood of the Atonement, the Lord he is God!

In this great controversy, of which Carmel was but a shadow-picture, we find *the ultimate solution of the problem of God.*

The world is ever asking, "Is there a God; and where and what is he?" The answer is not to be found in reviews nor in scientific and philosophic investigations, nor even in our Theological Seminaries where the "ontological" and "teleological" and "cosmological" arguments are presented in all their phases. The final answer is by the altar of Calvary, at the Battle of the Gods.

To begin with, here is the argument *for the existence of God.*

Else whence the fire from heaven? The most unaccountable thing in human history is the passion of Christ. The wisest of the group of French infidels who corrupted the faith of the world a hundred years ago, was Rousseau, who was constrained to say, "Jesus died like a God!" We must needs have a God to account for this passion of God. He who stands at the Cross and views it calmly and dispassionately,

must say, as Moses did when he saw the bush aflame in the desert of Midian, "I will turn aside and see this great thing." And out of the burning bush the Voice answers, "I am that I am!" So speaks, for himself, the self-existent One.

And here is the argument *for the unity of God.*

In the free-thinking of our time it is not infrequently affirmed that it is a matter of indifference what God a man believes in, if only he live well. The Scriptures declare, on the contrary, that the "Lord our God is a jealous God, and will not that his honor shall be given to another." The Jews who stood in that great assemblage on Carmel had frontlets on their foreheads whereon was written, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord!" and "Thou shalt have no other Gods before him!" The sequel of that controversy appalls us. At the order of Elijah the four hundred and fifty priests of the false gods of Israel were brought down to the brook Kishon and slain! Is not this, however, the retribution which has befallen the priests of all pagan gods? What else is the meaning of the ruined shrines and temples that line the path of history? Where is the Pantheon? And where are the Schools of Philosophy that stood by the banks of the Ilyssus? The saddest graves on earth are those of the dead religions. Dagon is ever falling on his face before the Ark of God. There is room for only one God in this world. The religion that was vindicated once for all on Calvary is slowly, relentlessly, surely crowding all other religions to the wall. The people of Athens walked between a procession of philosophers and a colonnade of graven images to the

place where they hopelessly reared their altar "To an unknown God." To them came Paul, with the story of the fire that fell on Calvary to seal the sacrifice of divine compassion for guilty men, saying, "Him whom ye ignorantly worship declare I unto you!"

The failure of the false religions has been grotesquely pathetic. The derision of Elijah on Carmel is merely an echo of that divine burst of laughter out of heaven at the kings and rulers who cry, "Let us break his bands asunder and cast away his cords from us!" He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh! The temples crumble, the priests die; one altar remains, the Cross on Calvary, the sole altar of the true God.

And, again, we have here the argument *for the prayer-hearing God.*

We are told by unbelievers that prayer has only a reflexive power; that is to say, its sole efficacy lies in its reactive influence on the petitioner. This is true of all prayers except those which are offered to the true God. "O Baal, hear us!" But there is no voice, nor answer, nor any that regardeth. The great prayer of the world is for deliverance from sin; and the answer to that prayer is at the cross: God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son to suffer and die for us. Then comes the *a fortiori* logic of the apostle: "If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him freely give us all things?" Here is the seal of divine approval put on all the great promises as to prayer, such as, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." There is no fact in human experience so conclusively proven as the effi-

cacy of prayer. Line up the witnesses, millions on millions, and hear their testimony; "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all his troubles." Let any court of justice pass on that testimony, and what would the verdict be? Shall a fact be established by the mouth of two witnesses? What, then, of millions? Shall those who have prayed to Baal and heard no response, be allowed to offer their testimony in rebuttal? Such a proposal would be laughed out of any court. Call Bartimeus, the blind beggar who sat by the wayside in the Vale of Jericho: "I was blind from my birth," he says, "until I made my prayer, 'Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!' And he answered, 'What wilt thou?' And I cried, 'O that I might receive my sight!' He said, 'Receive thy sight!' And behold these open eyes!" On the word of innumerable witnesses such as he, rests the argument of the prayer-hearing God.

And, once more, we have at Calvary the argument *for the God of Salvation.*

Our God is the God of Salvation; blessed be his name! And this is the great factor in the theistic problem. By the cross we are given to understand that God has power to deliver from sin. By the fire that consumed the sacrifice we know that he can save unto the uttermost all that will come unto him. "And there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved." The God of Grace is the only God. The God that answereth by fire, let him be God! The passion of Christ is the convincing proof of Christ's divinity. We know God by the print of the nails in his hands. Are you a doubter? Have

you gone groping, like Job, and saying, "O that I knew where I might find him"? Come, then, as doubting Thomas did, and hear the God of Calvary say, "Reach hither thy finger and thrust it into these wounds; and be not faithless, but believing." It is a wonderful fact that the death of Jesus, which marks the lowest point of divine humiliation, is the very climax of the argument for his Godhood. All doubts are solved when we solve the mystery of the Atonement; for then, perceiving how the Lord hath answered by fire, we cry, like Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

But this is not convincing to all. The God who has unveiled himself as "Christ crucified" is ever "foolishness to the Greeks and a stumbling-block to the Jews." The natural heart is averse to the logic of God. In life's brightest hours we are loath to think of it. The people who went away from Carmel, crying, "The Lord he is God!" were only temporarily impressed, and soon returned to the worship of Baal. The Lord's controversy is going on all about us. We are surrounded by irrefutable proofs that God lives and answers prayer, and saves those who penitently call upon him. But "the world is so much with us"; we are too busy to attend to these things. The only rational plan to pursue is to clinch the impression by a resolution, here and now, "If the Lord be God, we will follow him."

The hour is coming when every one of us must face the problem. What shall we do in the swellings of Jordan? In a ministry of thirty-odd years, I have never known a man or woman who, on approaching death, in possession of reason, did not seek the God

of salvation. The mother of David Hume, a simple-hearted Scotchwoman, forsook the religion of Christ, and followed her son into infidelity; but O, the dreariness of it! Not even her devotion to her brilliant son could comfort her. On her death-bed she wrote him a letter, full of pathetic entreaty that he would give her back her God, her Bible, and her Saviour. The prayer to Baal is unavailing. No man offers it in the hour that trieth his soul. The God of Calvary, the God that answereth by fire, the God of Salvation, alone can then help us.

JOURNEY XVII

IN WHICH THE TEN TRIBES, HAVING FINISHED THEIR COURSE, PASS INTO OBLIVION

THE story of the overthrow of the Northern Kingdom and the carrying away of the Ten Tribes is fraught with tragic interest. The time was about 720 B.C. This was two hundred and fifty years after the secession under Jeroboam, the man in the pillory, "who made Israel to sin." The last in the dismal procession of wicked kings was Hoshea, who, after paying tribute for a time to Assyria, was detected in a counter-plot with Egypt, and shut up in prison. The capital city was besieged, and, after a desperate defense of three years, was obliged by stress of famine and pestilence to surrender. The homes and palaces were razed, and their stones rolled into the valley below. "The crown of pride and the glory of Ephraim was trodden under foot." The ruins of royal wickedness were given over to the owl and the bittern.

And what became of the captives? They were carried away in successive deportations toward the east. But whither? Where were "Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan"? There have been countless conjectures. Rawlinson says, "The Ten Tribes are found a hundred times in a hundred different lands." They have been located here and there and everywhere, from the foot of the Himalayas to the Irish Sea. In the apocryphal book of Esdras it is recorded that they,

were "carried over the waters to the land of Arsareth, a country hemmed in by mountains, where mankind never dwelt." They have been identified with the Celts, the Anglo-Saxons, the Mongolians, the Aborigines of North America, the Nestorians, indeed with almost every nation on earth. And still the mystery remains.

In point of fact there is no "mystery"; and there are no "lost tribes." It was only the people of the cities who were carried away into captivity; the farmers were left, for prudential reasons, to till the fields; and colonists were brought in from Assyria, who mingled with them, producing the mongrel race of Samaritans, with whom the Jews "had no dealings" in the time of Christ, and whose descendants are regarded contemptuously to this day. Of those who were carried away it is probable that many were, in process of time, amalgamated with their captors, while others returned to Palestine with their brethren under the decree of Cyrus. Thus the Ten Tribes were scattered, but not "lost"; as the Lord had said, "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth" (Amos ix, 9). One of the poets in writing of this dispersion, says:

"Like dew on the mountain,
Like the foam on the river,
Like the bubble on the fountain,
They are gone forever."

But they were not gone out of the divine sight and providential care. He who notes the fall of a wounded sparrow was mindful of them all.

But the Northern Kingdom was no more. The last trace of its government was blotted out. All tribal distinctions were obliterated. The nation as such was extinguished like a falling star, leaving only a lurid trail behind it.

There is no logic like the logic of events; and there is no philosophy like the philosophy of history. As we note the vanishing troops of captives, with their faces set toward an unknown destination, we are bound to emphasize some important facts.

To begin with, *Jehovah is God.*

This was the basic truth of Jewish life. It was announced to Moses out of the burning bush in the Desert of Midian: "And God said, I am that I am. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah hath sent me unto you." It was set forth with the manifold emphasis of the successive plagues at the Court of Pharaoh, when Moses said, "Thus saith Jehovah, Let my people go!" It was proclaimed with the solemnity of a fundamental statute from the flaming mountain, when, amid thunders and lightnings and the sound of the trumpet waxing louder and louder, a Voice was heard saying, "I am Jehovah your God, who hath brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of your bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me!"

The trouble began in the Northern Kingdom when Jeroboam set up the golden calves at Dan and Bethel. It was only a question of time when this specious form of idolatry would develop into deeper sin. The shrines of Moloch were introduced, and the people offered up their children in his fiery arms. Then came the orgies

in the groves of Ashtoreth, the goddess of uncleanness. So the nation went from bad to worse continually, during its lifetime of two hundred and fifty years, until the doom was pronounced, "because they hardened their neck and would not believe in Jehovah their God."

It has been said that nations are like individuals in that they have their infancy, their joyous youth, their vigorous manhood, and then decrepitude and death. Shall it be so with our Republic? God forbid! Yet this has been the destiny of nations from the beginning until now. The pathway of the centuries is lined with the ruins of thrones and dynasties. If there is any truth in history, the life of our Republic will be measured by its loyalty to Jehovah as the true God.

In the announcement of the hymns in divine service it is not uncommon for the minister to say, "We shall omit the last verse." But to treat our National Anthem thus would be to lose the entire pith and point of it. The first verse is,

"My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee we sing:
Land where our fathers died,
Land of the Pilgrims' pride,
From every mountain side
Let freedom ring."

It is not enough, however, to sing the praises of freedom; for freedom is an empty name unless it be founded on a just recognition of him who has made and preserved us a nation. Wherefore, sing on! Sing to the logical end:

"Our fathers' God, to thee,
Author of liberty,
To thee we sing:
Long may our land be bright
With freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might,
Great God, our King!"

It is a true saying, "The nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish." The only reason why our Republic may not continue until the end of time lies in the possibility of its departure from God.

And another truth to be learned from the dispersion of the Ten Tribes is this: *The Law of Jehovah is Irrevocable.*

The sum total of divine law on its retributive side is, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." This is true of nations as of men. With nations the death is annihilation, in the necessity of the case. For a nation has no life beyond the circumscription of time; wherefore, it must be dealt with under the law of exact retribution; that is, its accounts must be balanced here and now.

It is not so, however, with individuals. A man, unlike a nation, is immortal. This must be considered in any rational view of Providence. We see the righteous afflicted and the wicked "flourishing like a green bay tree"; but remember, time is only a small arc of the great circle of eternity which constitutes the lifetime of a man. The God who, as Anne of Austria said, "is a sure paymaster," has the unending æons in which to balance his accounts with us. Wherefore, the death of a man is not annihilation, but a spiritual death of shame and remorse for wasted privileges and

lost opportunities. The seed-sowing is here; the reaping is forever. And "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The law is implacable: "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

And that is a good law. It involves a principle which lies at the very basis of social order and personal well-being. The fact that it means retribution does not affect its integrity. No one doubts that the law of gravity, by which the worlds are kept true to their orbits, is a good law; yet the average life of a "lofter" (that is, a workman engaged on the steel framework of our great buildings) is said to be only ten years. By the law of gravity, men are falling and dying every day; yet no one blames the law for it.

The law of retribution works automatically. If it could be supposed that there were no God in the universe, with the present order of things remaining, it would still be true that the soul that sinneth shall die. A man recently convicted of murder in one of our municipal courts, cursed the magistrate who sentenced him to the gallows-tree. But was the magistrate to blame? Nay, rather the statute; nor even the statute except as it expresses a principle which is grounded in the necessities of social life. The men, women, and children who were carried away from their happy homes in Palestine to a perpetual exile, had only themselves to blame for the doom which befell them. It is the part of God, in his magisterial office, to lay his forensic sanction upon a law which is interwoven with our nerves and sinews; "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

Still another truth emphasized in this historic event is this: *The Word of Jehovah is Yea and Amen.*

The people of the Northern Kingdom were entrusted with the Oracles of God; but they were utterly false to their trust. In these days of Biblical controversy there are faint-hearted people who fear that the Scriptures are in danger. In fact, however, the assault upon the Citadel is no more vigorous to-day than it ever has been. There are more people who believe in the Bible than at any previous time; and there are more, too, who assault it. The argument has not changed. History repeats itself. "The thing that hath been shall be." The Ten Tribes took issue with their brethren of the Southern Kingdom in rejecting such portions of the Scriptures as did not satisfy their "inner consciousness"; and their descendants receive only the Pentateuch to this day. The most virulent attack of the mischievous critics of our time is against the truth of the prophetic writings; and it was precisely so among the Ten Tribes. Amos and Hosea were divinely sent to warn them of their impending fate, but all their warnings and entreaties were in vain. Amos cried, "Behold the days are coming, saith the Lord, when I will send a famine in the land; not a famine of bread nor a thirst of water, but a famine of hearing the Word of God. And it shall come to pass, saith Jehovah, that I will darken the earth in the clear day." But the people derided him. Hosea cried, "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, O Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim?" And the people said, mockingly, "Doth he not speak in

parables?" It is a significant fact that when Savonarola was crying out against the maladministration of justice in Florence in the fifteenth century, he used over and over again with terrific emphasis the very words of these rejected prophets of Israel. Yet his hearers, under the lead of irreverent scholarship, heeded them not. "The prophets have not been fulfilled," says Harnack; and "There are prophecies which cannot be fulfilled," adds Professor Briggs, "because their time has passed by." But what says Christ? "Not one jot or one tittle shall pass away till all be fulfilled." And if further argument were needed in behalf of the truth of prophecy, it is found in a ubiquitous presence which cannot be gainsaid; to wit, the Wandering Jew.

JOURNEY XVIII

IN WHICH JUDAH AND BENJAMIN ARE LED INTO CAPTIVITY

"I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the exalted prince, favorite of Merodach, noble emperor, possessor of wisdom, seeker after truth, untiring ruler, wise, pious, first-born of Nabopolassar."

So begin the state papers of Nebuchadnezzar who, as the result of recent researches, is the best known of ancient Oriental kings. The Man with the Spade has unearthed his royal cities, his palaces and temples, and by the inscriptions brought to light has confirmed the records of Holy Writ. If the friends of the destructive criticism would carry on a successful campaign, it behooves them to enjoin this Man with the Spade; for he invariably pays tribute to the historicity of the Word of God.

In one of these inscriptions we have the prayer of Nebuchadnezzar at the beginning of one of his campaigns, possibly his campaign against Judah: *"O Merodach, lord of all countries, hear me! May I live to enjoy the palace which I have built in Babylon. May I live long and prosper. May I be satisfied with an abundance of children. May I receive large tribute from all the kings of the world. May my descendants rule forever."*

In another he refers to his triumphant return from a hostile excursion into some neighboring country; and the terms are such as to make it point with probability to the conquest of Judah: "*By Merodach's help, to far-off countries, over distant mountains, from the upper to the lower sea, by long journeys and difficult ways, in pathless places, where no foothold could be found, by a road of hardships and without water, I pursued and subdued the rebellious. I repaired temples and made the people prosperous. I removed both bad and good. Silver and gold and precious stones, copper, cedar, and other valuables in great abundance, products of the mountains and the seas, brought I to Babylon into the presence of Merodach.*"

The picture is that of a train of Jewish captives, chained together, on a weary journey toward the east. In front is Zedekiah, stripped of his royal purple, blinded, and put to an open shame. His princes follow, carrying bags of sand, the bags being made of the parchments of their sacred scrolls; and after them the people, taunted by their captors, "Sing us the songs of Zion!" Such is the melancholy end of a thousand years. The landmarks of the nation are removed. The lights of the golden candlestick are quenched. If we follow these exiles, we shall hear their lament by the rivers of Babylon: "We sat down and wept; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps on the willows, and they required of us mirth, saying, Sing us the songs of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?"

Why this tragic dénouement? The answer is clear: It was by reason of a violated Covenant. I am aware

that it is out of fashion to speak thus of the Covenant; but the emphasis must be placed just there. It pleased God to make a Covenant with our first parents in the very hour when they fell into sin, to wit, "The Seed of woman shall bruise the serpent's head, but it shall bruise his heel." The plan of redemption was thus announced in brief. In the fullness of time the Seed of woman was to appear as the knight-errant of the fallen race, and thus appearing was to bear his commission as the Christ, that is, the Anointed One, who should become the conqueror of death in behalf of men. This was the Covenant; and the Seed of woman was himself the messenger or Angel of the Covenant. All along the Old Testament story we mark the appearance of this Angel of the Covenant, known also under the name of Jehovah, as the vindicator of righteousness. The Messianic hope, thus outlined, runs like a red trail, from the protevangel in Paradise through the Old Testament Scriptures to their last prophecy, "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings."

This Covenant was iterated and reiterated again and again; and on four occasions with peculiar emphasis. Once to Abraham when he was called and set apart with his household as "a peculiar people"; peculiar in the fact that they were to be the depositary of this Messianic hope. The "Voice" by which Abraham was guided on his strange journey along the banks of the Euphrates was the voice of Jehovah, the Angel of the Covenant; as he himself said after his incarnation, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad."

Again to Isaac, the most diffident and retiring of the patriarchs; who, as he climbed up Mount Moriah, "bearing wood for the sacrifice," set forth in parabolic foregleam and silhouette the great tragedy which was to be enacted on Calvary when Christ bore his cross to the place of execution and was made a sin-offering on our behalf.

And again to Jacob; whose first vision of God's singular interest in sinful men came to him at Bethel, where he saw the ladder reaching from his lonely resting-place to the heavenly throne, with angels going up and down, bearing his prayers aloft, and descending with blessings upon him. He lived thereafter in the memory of that vision until the time when, leaning on his staff, blind and burdened with years, he pronounced this blessing on Judah: "The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the nations be." The Shiloh, or Prince of Peace, here predicted, is the Angel of the Covenant, incarnated as Christ the Saviour, or Immanuel, "God with us."

And then, with deepest emphasis, the Covenant was renewed to Moses; when the Angel of the Covenant appeared to him at the burning bush as Jehovah, and gave him his commission. The name of Moses is accounted worthy of a place in the roll-call of heroes because of his clear apprehension of the Messianic hope: as it is written, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of

sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

It is thus evident that God's purpose was to keep his people in mind of the Covenant. To this end he had separated them as a people unto himself, that they might transmit that Covenant to succeeding ages. Here is the clew to history. The central point is Calvary; all the lines of the Old Economy converged toward it and all subsequent lines have radiated from it. The key to "the logic of events" is the Kingship of Christ. This is that "Secret of the Lord," of which it is written, "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his Covenant." A reverent apprehension of this fact is necessary to a just interpretation not only of past chronicles but of passing events.

The Covenant, thus continually called to mind, was as continually violated by those to whom God had entrusted it. The story from Genesis to Malachi is a weary record of mutinous disloyalty; but there are four notable occasions on which the Covenant was so formally rejected as to hasten the final disinheritance of the chosen people.

The first was in 1096 B.C., when the Jews revolted against the Theocracy, or Government of God, crying, "Give us a king to rule over us!" And God gave them Saul the son of Kish, "to their hurt." The period of a hundred years that followed was, for a time, brightened by the faith of David, who, perceiving the Kingship of Christ, regarded himself as vicegerent under him; "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies my

footstool!" Being "a man after God's own heart," he did obeisance to the Covenant and to Christ who was destined to be king over all.

The second rejection was in 976 B.C., when the Ten Tribes revolted and raised the cry, "To your tents, O Israel!" They crowned Jeroboam who stands pilloried historically as the king "who made Israel to sin." He set up the golden calves at Dan and Bethel, and the people kissed their hands before them. Then came eighteen kings each worse than the former; and for two hundred and fifty years the Northern Kingdom continued under a momentum that carried it from bad to worse, until Shalmanezer came and utterly blotted it out.

The third rejection was in 586 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar made his campaign against Judea. For a hundred and thirty-five years the Southern Kingdom had had an opportunity of profiting by the tragic story of the Ten Tribes, and wasted it. There was a brief reformation in the reign of Josiah, when the neglected Bible was found in a storeroom of the temple and read before the people, who bowed down in repentance and renewed their Covenant. This was, however, but the glow of an Indian Summer; they soon returned to their idols. Then the Babylonish Army laid siege to Jerusalem, which, being reduced to the last extremity by famine and pestilence, capitulated "on the ninth day of the seventh month" of that memorable year. The people had renounced God, preferring an alliance with Egypt which proved but a broken reed that pierced through their hand.

The fourth and final rejection of the Covenant was

30 A.D. The Seed of woman had appeared in the fullness of time. The Angel of the Covenant had come unto his own "and his own received him not." Was there ever such fatuity, since the beginning of history? The Jews had been looking for their Messiah for a thousand years; and when he appeared they led him away to Calvary, crying, "Crucify him!" On the *titulum* above his head was a significant inscription, "This is the king of the Jews."

They formulated their own doom: saying, "His blood be on us and on our children." God has taken them at their word. For two thousand years they have been wanderers upon the face of the earth; a nation without a country, a people without a king. They have gone about like their fathers "entangled in the wilderness," of whom it was written, "They could not enter in because of unbelief." Their king is riding triumphantly among the nations; but they refuse to believe in him. Their rejection of Christ is the proverb of two millenniums. They persist in saying, "We will not have him to rule over us!"

In this connection we note four miracles which must be forever unaccountable to those who rule God out of history; and they are miracles which cannot be ignored by thoughtful men.

The first is the Jew himself.

There are those who say they do not believe in miracles. Frederick the Great was one, yet he admitted, "If I must needs lay my hands upon a miracle, it is the Wandering Jew." Up and down through the earth he goes, with no rest to the sole of his feet; of splendid birth, of undisputed intellectual power, hold-

ing the purse-strings of the world, wielding a vast influence in international affairs, yet a kingless man. The standing reproach of the scattered people is that they have renounced their Covenant. Nevertheless, by the very terms of that Covenant, they have been kept as a separated and peculiar people until now. The Gulf Stream, rising in the South Atlantic, courses northward until it enters the Arctic Ocean, flowing as a distinct current between banks of cold water, with a volume a thousand times larger than the Amazon, bearing the genial influence of the Tropics to temper the climate of western Europe; so that Ireland, though in the same latitude as bleak Labrador, is a garden of beauty. So have the Jews remained distinct among the nations, true to their monotheistic traditions, and, so far forth, a blessing to the earth, yet persistently recreant to their Covenant and false to their King. Call your scientists, your biologists, and ethnologists, and let them explain this phenomenon if they can.

The second miracle is the Fulfillment of Prophecy with reference to this people.

Letter by letter and line by line the things that were predicted of them have proven true. For example, Noah said, "Japheth shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Have not the Gentiles inherited the Covenant of the Jews? Has not the birthright of the disinherited son fallen to us? They still repeat their ancient boast, "We have Abraham as our Father"; but their Messiah is our Christ. Salvation is of the Jews; but thus far the Gentiles alone have accepted it. All assaults upon the accuracy of many prophecies like this have been utterly futile. The unbiased critics of Holy Scripture

are constrained with one accord to bow down before this vindication of truth.

The third miracle is the Divine Patience.

A thousand years God bore with his stiff-necked people before he cast them off. He renewed his Covenant with them again and again. "He sent his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending because he had compassion on his people and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked his messengers and despised his words and misused his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, because there was no remedy." You will search in vain for a more pathetic appeal than that of Isaiah at the most critical period of Jewish history: "Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken; I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers! They have forsaken the Lord. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head there is no soundness; but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse, ye shall be devoured with the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

And the fourth miracle is the Covenant itself.

For, however that Covenant has been slighted and repudiated and broken on the part of sinful men, it has been kept always and absolutely on the part of God; as it is written, "Let God be true, but every man a liar." And the Covenant still holds with reference to the Jews. There is one prophecy which remains to be fulfilled, to wit, the prophecy of their restoration. The hope of "Zionism" is merely a dream. The scattered Jews will probably never return to Palestine; but they will find a truer restoration in an acknowledgment of Jesus as their Messiah. The time will come when the truth will dawn upon them like a sunrise; and they will return to him as doves flocking to their windows. They will acknowledge the truth of the Covenant, and the Seed of woman shall reign over them. This is one of the appointed signs of the coming of Christ. On that memorable day, when, sitting over against Jerusalem, he wept over its impending fate, he cried, "O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! And now, behold! your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

The lesson for us is one of obligation to the scattered Jews. Let us who dwell in the tents of Shem pray for the peace of Jerusalem. "Peace be within thy gates and prosperity within thy palaces." I was once greatly perplexed by a service which I attended in the great synagogue at Rotterdam. The place was

thronged with worshipers. The lights were unkindled, except the candles on the altar, which just made the darkness visible. The high priest chanted the service in a melancholy voice. I felt as if in a mummy crypt. What could this mean? All at once the character of the service changed. The lights in the great chandeliers were kindled. The worshipers produced tapers, lighted them, and waved them aloft. The priest had risen and was reciting in a gladsome voice, the men responding "Hosanna! Hosanna!" I learned afterward, on inquiry, that this service was commemorative of the overthrow of Jerusalem; and the kindling of the lights meant that Messiah was to come.

O, when will the hoodwink be taken from Israel's eyes? When will they see that Jesus is the Christ? When will they cry before him, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord"? We rejoice to sing:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all."

But, remembering the dreary exile of this people and the blindness of their eyes, let us pray for the hastening of the time when their long-rejected Christ shall gather them as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings.

"Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail him who saves you by his grace
And crown him Lord of all!"

JOURNEY XIX

IN WHICH ESTHER MAKES A LONG JOURNEY ON A FATEFUL ERRAND

THE Book of Esther is a tragedy. The Dramatis Personæ pass before us.

Ahasuerus, King of Persia; better known to us as Xerxes the Great; cruel, capricious, magnificent; his word was irreversible law; it was he who lashed the sea because it would not obey him.

Esther, his beautiful queen; a Jewess, who had concealed her lineage to avoid the finger of scorn; elevated to the throne by a strange providence; her beauty radiant as the star that sparkled in her name.

Haman, prime minister and court favorite; villain of the play; puffed up with a little brief authority; filled with anger because of the refusal of an aged Jew to do him obeisance; persuading the king to pronounce the death-sentence on all Jews within his realm.

Mordecai, foster-father of Esther; author of the trouble which threatened his people; an old hero who would not "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee where thrift might follow fawning."

The Drama is in four Scenes, all located in Shushan, the capital of Persia.

Scene First: On the house-tops of the Jewish homes. Men and women are kneeling with uplifted eyes and

hands pressed together. They have learned their doom, and are praying to their God. The blast of a trumpet; the beating of horses' hoofs beyond the city gates; heralds are riding forth with the death-sentence. By the Assyrian mountains, by the southern plain, by the Parthian Sea, all Jews must die!

Scene Second: The open square beneath the Queen's window. Mordecai leans on his ivory staff uttering a low, wailing cry. He succeeds at length in attracting the Queen's attention. She appears at her lattice. He tells the sorrowful story of which she, in her retirement, has been kept in ignorance, and entreats her to go in unto the king in behalf of her people. In vain does she protest: "The king is at his revels; to approach him uninvited is death under the Persian law." Mordecai persists: "It matters not; the fate of Israel depends upon thee; and who knows whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" She pleads, resists, and yields: "Gather together the Jews in Shushan and fast for me; I will go in unto the king; and if I perish, I perish!"

Scene Third: The Queen's apartments. Three days she has been fasting and pleading with God. The hour is come! If ever beauty had a mission it is now. "Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain"; but the beauty and favor of Esther are consecrated to God: therefore, may he multiply them a hundredfold this day! She stands in her doorway and looks across the great quadrangle to the banquet hall. It is, perhaps, a hundred yards distant. Nay, miles on miles! For she goes with her life in her hand. A long, long journey is before her. Many an adventurer has crossed moun-

tains and deserts and found them less difficult than this. She has made her resolve: "In behalf of my people I will go!"

Scene Fourth: The banquet hall. The king and his courtiers have been feasting many days. There are sounds of music and laughter, and the clinking of golden cups. The doors are defended by stolid Nubian guards. Who comes yonder along the marble walk? They start in amazement and whisper to one another, "It is the Queen!" As she draws near, arrayed in her royal apparel, they stand aside to let her pass. At the threshold she pauses; her lips move in prayer: "God of my fathers, hear me! Incline the king's heart toward me and let me prevail in behalf of my people. God of my fathers, be with me!" She has crossed the threshold. She stands in the banquet hall. The red-eyed revelers cease their laughter. The king has risen from his seat, half sobered by the vision of beauty. Pale but resolute, she faces him. A mighty moment that! The destiny of a nation is trembling in the balance. Her beauty, her calm demeanor, her magnificent courage have quenched the anger blazing in her husband's eyes. He lifts the scepter and extends it. "What wilt thou, Queen Esther? It shall be done unto thee, even to the half of my kingdom." The crisis is past. The prayer of the beautiful Queen is heard. Israel is saved!

And what does this signify to us? THE POWER OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER. Observe the bended form of the suppliant Queen. Here is the noblest attitude of human nature; to bow in behalf of others at the throne of the heavenly grace.

But will God hearken? Will he who sits upon the circle of the universe, administering the laws by which the worlds revolve in their orbits, turn aside from his great enterprises to hear the prayer of a child who is just now kneeling at its bedside, saying, "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep"? If the laws of the Medes and Persians were swerved from their course by the supplication of Esther, shall not our Father in heaven much more hear the cry of the least of his little ones?

"There is an eye that never sleeps
Beneath the wing of night;
There is an ear that never shuts
When sink the beams of light.

"There is an arm that never tires
When human strength gives way;
There is a love that never fails
When human loves decay.

"That eye is fixed on seraph throngs,
That arm upholds the sky,
That ear is filled with angels' songs,
That love is throned on high.

"But there's a power which man can wield
When human strength is vain,
That eye, that arm, that love to reach,
That listening ear to gain.

"That power is prayer, which soars on high
To Jesus on his throne,
And moves the hand that moves the world,
To bring salvation down."

The first duty of a man, logically and chronologically, is to make his own calling and election sure.

He cannot look after the spiritual welfare of others until he has attended to this. Let him, therefore, come like the publican, beating on his breast and crying, "God be merciful to me!" Let him come to the Cross and to the fountain filled with blood; and, by the truth of a hundred great and precious promises, the Lord will say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

But if this were all, religion would, indeed, be a selfish thing. Where is the captain of *The Algona?* Ten years ago his ship went down with all her crew and passengers; and he swam ashore. It is little wonder that he fled and has kept himself in hiding to this day. Alas, for the Christian who thinks only of himself! Let us spend and be spent for others, and pray without ceasing for those about us.

It stands to reason that, if God is willing to hear a man's prayer for himself, he will much more hear him when he pleads unselfishly. Paul was never so great as when he cried, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh!" We stand reverently at the door of John Knox's closet while he pleads, "O God, give me Scotland or I die!" Here is our coign of vantage. We can convert! A stupendous thought. "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins." Wives can save their husbands, parents can save their children, by the power of intercessory prayer. God hears and answers it.

A legend says that the angel Sandalphon waits at the ramparts of heaven with his feet on a ladder of light. He is listening. The songs of the multitude

of adoring saints and angels come from above, but he heeds them not. The sounds of earth's traffic and pleasure are borne from afar, but he heeds them not. He hearkens for the mother's cry on behalf of her son, for the sob of a burdened heart that pleads for the lost and wandering; and he bears these supplications aloft, laying them before the throne, where they turn to garlands at the feet of God.

We are encouraged by great promises. The prayer of intercession falls within the circumscription of all God's assurances. No limitations are put upon it; no conditions are affixed to it, except that it be offered in faith. "Ask, and it shall be given unto you;—for every one that asketh receiveth." Why need the wayward die? Why need the prodigal perish in his sins? God's covenant is sure. His promises are Yea and Amen: "I will be a God to you and your children after you."

And the promises of Scripture are buttressed by the testimony of those who have tried and proved them. I knew a woman, about forty years ago, whose prayers went up night and day for an unbelieving husband and eight sons and daughters. One by one they were gathered in. She went to heaven ten years ago and met her Lord, saying, "Here am I and they whom thou hast given me." Great conquests of prayer! The father who stood at his gate, looking into the distance and waiting expectantly for the return of his son, who had gone into the far country and was wasting his substance in riotous living, was not disappointed, did not wait in vain. The day came when he saw his son return, and "went out while he

was yet a great way off and fell upon his neck and kissed him."

We are led, furthermore, to believe in the power of intercessory prayer by the fact that Christ in his earthly ministry never turned a deaf ear to it. Did he refuse the request of Jairus, whose daughter was near to death; or that of the Syro-Phœnician woman, though his disciples entreated, "Send her away; she troubleth us"? Did he disregard the solicitous kindness of the four friends who carried the paralytic up the outer stairway and let him down through the roof into the midst? Nay, it is written: "When he saw *their* faith," he healed his palsy and forgave his sin. Wherever he went the sick were brought out on couches and laid along the way; "and he healed them every one."

But the strongest argument for the efficacy of intercessory prayer is the fact that Christ "ever liveth to make intercession for us." And his is an all-prevailing plea. The power of his intercession lies in the fact that he died for us.

> "Five bleeding wounds He bears,
> Received on Calvary;
> They pour effectual prayers,
> They strongly plead for me."

We need no *Ave Maria*. We have one and only one Mediator with God the Father, that is, Jesus Christ the righteous. And, however we may revere the Virgin Mother, inasmuch as we know that she bears no nail-prints in her hands we do not plead, "Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us!" In all our sup-

plication for others we do remember this, that Christ prays for us. He is our Sandalphon, who lays our supplications before the throne of God.

A word as to the Sequel of the Drama. The Jews were spared. Haman, the magnificent, swung from the gallows-tree. Mordecai was clothed with purple. The homes of Israel were filled with thanksgiving. The feast of Purim, then instituted, is kept among the scattered Jews to this day. In that feast we have a foregleam of the joy of heaven. The noblest pleasure of our life here is "the generous pleasure of kindly deeds," and in heaven much more. The joy of heaven is "the joy of the Lord," who rejoices with us because "that which was lost is found."

I stand at heaven's gate and see a man coming this way. He lived his life on earth with no thought of the hereafter; heard the Gospel, but would not heed it. The voice of singing is borne to him, "Worthy art thou to receive honor and glory and dominion and power, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood!" The gates are open; will he enter? Nay; what is there in heaven for him? How can he mingle in the praises of a Saviour whom he never knew, or participate in such uncongenial joys? The gates are open; but he seeks the place for which his life and character have fitted him.

I see another coming, alone. He sought his own salvation while he lived on earth and brings no trophies of benevolent service. O lonely, lonely man! Let him enter; but the joy of heaven must be a meager joy for him.

But here comes one who has rejoiced to spend and

be spent for his fellow men. He comes like a toiler from the harvest field whose arms are laden with sheaves. What a welcome awaits him! What greetings and handclaspings! Here are those who have entered before him, saved by his faithful toil and intercession. They stretch forth grateful hands to welcome him. And, beholding this, we remember the saying that is written, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."

JOURNEY XX

IN WHICH A HEATHEN KING IS STRANGELY LED TO RESTORE THE EXILES TO THEIR ANCESTRAL HOME

THE forty-fifth of Isaiah is one of the most wonderful chapters in that wonderful book. It refers with much particularity to Cyrus, son of Cambyses and nephew of Darius, prince, statesman, conqueror, founder of the Medo-Persian Empire.

The most remarkable thing about the chapter is that it purports to have been written about 700 B.C.; that is, nearly two hundred years before Cyrus was born. "Impossible!" So say the destructive critics; which accounts for the invention of Deutero-Isaiah. "In the nature of the case," they say, "it is impossible that a man should have foreknown an event two hundred years before it occurred; wherefore the alleged prophecy must have been written by somebody who lived after the event." Of course, this eliminates the supernatural from prophecy and leaves God out of the reckoning. But that presents no difficulty; for that is precisely what these sciolists wish to do.

And what is the message? What does the Lord say to Cyrus? Briefly this, "I have called thee by name; I have surnamed thee; I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me."

Observe first, "I have called thee by name." A most surprising circumstance. "It is," says Kitto, "as if a Persian of the reign of Nadir Shah had foretold that a hundred years thence a queen named Victoria should reign in England; the name being to him entirely foreign and strange, and having significance only among a people whose existence was scarcely known, and whose language not a person in the country understood."

Second, "I have surnamed thee"; that is, I have given thee designations of honor. He speaks of Cyrus as his "shepherd," "his anointed," as "the man that executeth my counsel," and "the righteous man out of the East." This portrayal of the character of Cyrus is verified by Xenophon and other historians, who speak of him as a model of princely honor and courage, a just and gentle man.

Third, "I have girded thee, though thou knewest me not." A girdle is for service. God never girds a man unless he has something for him to do. David knew that God had "girded him with strength"; and rejoiced in it; but here is a king who was divinely girded and was not aware of it. The prophecy in detail is as follows:

> "The LORD saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd,
> And shall perform all my pleasure;
> Even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built;
> And to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.
> Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus,
> Whose right hand I have holden,
> To subdue nations before him;
> I will loose the loins of kings,

To open before him the two-leaved gates;
And the gates shall not be shut;
I will go before thee,
And make the crooked places straight;
I will break in pieces the gates of brass,
And cut in sunder the bars of iron;
I will give thee the treasures of darkness,
And the hidden riches of secret places;
That thou mayest know that I, the LORD,
Which call thee by name, am the God of Israel.
For Jacob my servant's sake,
And Israel mine elect,
I have even called thee by name:
I have surnamed thee,
I have girded thee, though thou hast not known me."

For what had God thus girded him? In general terms, "to perform all his pleasure"; that is, to take part in that Programme of Events which is called History, the consummation of which is the coronation of Christ. But, more specifically, the service for which Cyrus was girded was the liberation of the captive Jews. It had been predicted that the term of their exile would be seventy years. At the end of that time the clock struck, and the man appeared. A more improbable thing was never known. The proclamation was issued by the man designated, at the moment indicated, and in the terms of prophecy. Here it is: "THUS SAITH CYRUS, KING OF PERSIA: ALL THE KINGDOMS OF THE EARTH HATH THE LORD, THE GOD OF HEAVEN, GIVEN UNTO ME; AND HE HATH CHARGED ME TO BUILD HIM AN HOUSE IN JERUSALEM OF JUDAH. WHO IS THERE AMONG YOU OF ALL HIS PEOPLE? THE LORD HIS GOD BE WITH HIM, AND LET HIM GO UP" (2 Chron. 36:23).

The exiles returned 536 B.C. There were fifty thousand of them. They were led by Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, a prince of Judah. With him were the flower of the captive people, priests, Levites, and others "whom the spirit of God had moved to go." It was not strange that the majority preferred to remain in Babylon; two generations had passed since their fathers had been led into captivity, and they were slow to undertake the hardships involved in returning. All who did return were volunteers, animated by a great purpose, namely, to rebuild the house of God. They were abundantly provided for the journey. Cyrus had furnished them with eight thousand camels and presented them with the golden vessels of the sanctuary which had been carried away by Nebuchadnezzar. They were four months on the way; and they lightened their weariness with song: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing" (Ps. 126.) The tribes of the desert wondered as they saw them pass. They had heard their fathers tell how, almost a century before, bands of captives had been carried toward the East in chains, weeping. Could these be the children of those bondmen, these who journeyed with glad step, and, from their bivouacs, awoke with gladness the echoes of the distant hills? "Then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them." To which the pilgrims replied, "Yea, the LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

So did they lend themselves to the accomplishment of God's purpose; and among them was the shadowy figure of Cyrus, who made this possible, and was himself being used as an instrument to prove that Jehovah alone is God.

On reaching their destination they at once began to rebuild the Temple. It was in Ziph, "the blossom month." The work continued for some years in the face of many discouragements and vexatious opposition of surrounding tribes. Then the enthusiasm of the builders oozed out. They longed to return to agricultural pursuits. The fields lay fallow in their sight. One by one they laid down the hammer and trowel and went forth to husbandry. The sanctuary was deserted; its bare walls were open to the sky; the winds from the heights of Moab swept through the unlinteled doors; owls made their nests in its nooks and crannies; foxes from the ravines of Hinnom crept in and out of the holy place; the outer precincts were filled with heaps of lumber and uncut stone.

At this juncture came the prophet Zechariah. He passed through the villages and among the farms exhorting the men to return to their appointed tasks. He strove to rekindle their ardor by reciting a series of glowing visions through which walked, in divine majesty, their Messianic King. The climax of his exhortations was reached in the words: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee! He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass; and his domininon shall be from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth!"

Now link that event with the triumphal entry of Jesus, which occurred A.D. 30. At that time the religion of the chosen people was much like the unfinished temple, and their government had been trodden down by alien feet. Jesus set out upon his last fateful journey to Jerusalem. His disciples were with him, and they were joined by other pilgrims on their way to the annual feast. Not far from the village of Bethphage he paused to rest, and sent two of his disciples for a beast of burden. In the meantime it was known in Jerusalem that Jesus was drawing near. The story of his preaching and miracles was on every lip. The people who were encamped in leafy booths on the hill-slopes about the city, saw the caravan approaching. Hearing the shouting and commotion, they hurried along the road, tearing off branches of the palm trees. So the two companies met, those going before joining with those who followed after in the cry, "Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!" Waving the palm branches and casting their garments in the road, they escorted him over the ford of the Kedron and on through the city gates. The people on the roofs and in the doorways saw the procession passing; traders, camel-drivers, rabbis in robes embroidered in gold, all gazing with interest. "Who is this?" "It is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews!" On toward the Temple moved the strange procession, still crying, "Hosanna, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!"

And again we note the shadowy figure of the divinely girded Cyrus, filling his place in the mighty plan.

This is history; Christ in the center, with the worthies of the Old Economy "going before," and those of the Christian church "coming after," uniting to welcome him.

If you would know the reason of this event, so singularly in contrast with other episodes in the humble and unostentatious life of Jesus, ask the evangelists; and observe how they unite in saying, "All this was done that the Scriptures might be fulfilled; as it is written, Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; for, behold, thy king cometh unto thee!"

Now link that incident with another which is still behind the veil. You will find it in the prophecies of the Apocalypse. John the dreamer saw the vision of The End, "the restitution of all things." The heavens were rolled up like a scroll and the stars were falling as when a fig-tree is shaken of its untimely figs. The hour is at hand! Angels and archangels have come forth to join with saints triumphant. The vast expanse is thronged with them. Armies! Armies! Armies, far as the eye can reach! Palms in their hands; shouts of victory. A trumpet sounds, a great angel proclaims that Time is no longer. Then the gates of heaven are rolled back and the king appears, robed in light and glory. He lifts his hands in benediction—intercessory hands, marked with the scars of his mediatorial pain,—while the heavens are ringing with the shout, "Hosanna, to the Son of David! Worthy art thou to receive honor and glory and dominion and power for ever and ever!" This is the consummation of events. The tabernacle of God is among men. Close the book and seal it. History is

written. Jesus is crowned. His dominion is from sea to sea and his kingdom from the river unto the ends of the earth.

And again, we mark the shadowy form of Cyrus. Is he now a captive in chains, dragged at the Victor's chariot wheels; or is he among those who wave the palm branches, putting to an eternal shame such as have lived in the clearer light and yet refuse to believe?

What are the inductions from this array of prophetic and historic facts? First, Jehovah alone is God.

This is the truth announced to Cyrus in his girding: "I am the Lord and there is none else; there is no God beside me." All history bears witness to it. The calves of Egypt, Baal and Ashtoreth, Zeus and Molech, the gods of the Pantheon, where are they? Have they not fallen on their faces before him? The "Battle of the Gods" is over long ago, and thoughtful men everywhere are crying, "The LORD, he is God!"

Second, As God is one, so also is his Word.

There are no other "sacred books." We are told that the Bible is mere "literature." It is literature shot through and through with the life of God. It is differentiated from all other books as man is set apart from the lower orders, by the fact that God has breathed into it. This is inspiration; *theo-pneustia.* The Bible is not a lifeless book but a living organism. It is not a collection of truths and precepts like the Analects of Confucius, but a procession of truths keeping time to the Gospel, and marching on to the

reign of Immanuel. "Search it," said Jesus, "for it testifies of me."

Third, God's purpose, also, is one.

It is set forth in the decree, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee; ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession" (Ps. 2:8). It is plain to be seen in the chronicles of the past that God has never swerved an hair's breadth from his purpose to enthrone his Only-begotten Son. A good deal has been written *pro* and *contra* about the religion of Tennyson; but surely he struck the major note when he sang:

"I doubt not through the ages one eternal purpose runs;
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

Fourth, The plan in which that purpose is formulated is also one.

Its formulation is history, which we cannot read with understanding, except as we see this golden thread of continuity. History is not a mere record of events and happenings tied up by Time the Chronicler, like a bundle of fagots; but rather a living tree. It is set forth thus in the Parable of the Mustard Seed; "which, indeed, is the least of all seeds; but when it groweth, it becometh a tree, so that the fowls of the air lodge in the branches of it." It has its roots in the divine purpose and its life in providence: One event grows out of another as boughs from the trunk, and twigs from the bough, and blossoms from the twig, and fruit from the blossom.

If this be so, there is no chance. We cannot say, It happened that Zachariah had a vision, or, It happened that Cyrus issued a proclamation, or, It happened that Jesus came riding into the Holy City. Nothing happens. As William the Conqueror landed from his little boat on the shore of Britain, he slipped and fell. There was a loud cry from his followers, who knew that this was the worst of ill omens. He recovered himself, however, and said, "See, my lords; by the grace of Heaven I take possession of England with both hands!" He thus turned the accident to a good purpose; but God knows no accident, he intends all. The vision may wait, but all must be fulfilled; "for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."

And there is no confusion. We hear the hum of traffic, the sounds of battle, the voices of laughter or weeping; and they have no apparent correlation. The builders on the walls are troubled, saying, "Cyrus is dead, and Darius knoweth us not; Tyre and Sidon are breathing out slaughter against us, and the Philistines are rattling their chariots yonder on the maritime plain!" But God says to his prophet, "Speak unto my people. All hearts are in my hands as the rivers of water. And, behold, your king cometh unto you!" If our eyes were open we should see the mountains full of God's horses and chariots. If we could take our position beside his throne, we should see that all things are conspiring toward the "one supreme divine event." Make way for the King!

"The eternal step of progress beats
To that great anthem, calm and slow,
Which God repeats."

And there is no haste. The lifetime of God is from everlasting to everlasting; with him a thousand years are as one day. Haste is the infirmity of mortal men; of merchants whose obligations fall due to-morrow; of lawyers whose briefs must be ready for the assembling of court; of preachers who must be in their pulpits at the ringing of the bell. But God never hurries to meet his appointments. The world is under condemnation and saints are crying, "How long, O Lord, how long?" and still he awaits the fullness of time. Time is not a reaper with sickle in hand; but a weaver at the loom, casting his shuttle to and fro, each cast of the shuttle a year or a century; and when, at length, he cuts the thread, behold, the fabric will be complete and the King shall array himself in it.

It remains to speak of the personal factor. Cyrus, Zerubbabel, Zechariah, each is girded for his place. If eighty men of threescore years and ten, succeeding one another, were placed in line, they would cover all history back to Adam. But each must stand in his allotted place; that is, in right relation to those "going before" and "coming after," and, above all, in right relation to him who stands at the center of all.

I am a part of God's plan; so are you. A man in Bethphage tethered an ass before his door; two men came and led it away; a fourth held it while Jesus mounted; then one cried, "Hosanna!" and others joined in. All these are nameless; but each fulfilled his part. The world knows who it was that cast his cloak at the crossing for Queen Elizabeth to tread on; but who knows the names of those who threw their

garments in the way before the Son of David? No matter: God remembers.

It is for us to stand in our places, girt about the loins and attending to our work. The glory of life is in being "laborers together with God." He hath girded thee, O man, whether or no thou knowest it. He hath named thee; he hath surnamed thee; he hath girded thee!

JOURNEY XXI

IN WHICH THE READER IS ASKED TO WALK THROUGH THE ANCIENT CITY OF ROME ON A DARK NIGHT

THE fall of Jerusalem was followed by a night of four centuries in which there was "no more open vision." The lights of the golden candlestick were extinguished. A voice was heard from Edom, calling, "Watchman, what of the night?" and the watchman answered, "The morning cometh and the night also!" It was a long, silent night, relieved only by the sound of the shuffling feet of those who stumbled in the dark. Life was like the dream of a delirious patient who tosses and cries, "Would God it were morning!" A night of four hundred years! The darkness was such as could be felt! And it was hopeless, save for that word of the prophet: "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings!"

So came the darkest hour, the hour before the dawn. The old priest Zacharias, who with his wife Elizabeth had been living on in the hope of Messiah, received a message and burst into song: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people! The dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death!"

So did Christ come at length to illuminate the world and gladden the hearts of the children of men. Be-

hold, what hath God wrought! We are living in the twentieth century of the Christian Era. The contrast is our argument. The sunless world of Malachi is rejoicing in the glory of the noon-day. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Our appeal is to thoughtful men, to such as can look on two pictures and draw a conclusion. They are asked to visit the world before Christ and compare it with the world we are living in. And if we observe a notable transformation, it will devolve upon us in sound reason to account for it.

Let us, to begin with, go to the Capitol at Rome; for this was the center of the civilized world of those days. The standard of the Golden Eagle is floating over it. What does that mean? That all nations have been subjugated. It is a time of profound peace. They will tell you that the gates of the Temple of Janus are closed. But it is the peace of stagnation and despair. The known world, a narrow strip of land around the Mediterranean, with some provinces beyond, has been brought into abject submission to the nondescript beast in Daniel's vision, the beast with iron teeth, "devouring and breaking in pieces." The Golden Milestone is now the world's center. The Orontes has at length flowed into the Tiber; and "all roads lead to Rome."

Let us next visit the Pantheon; where we shall observe the religious condition of the world. Here are multitudinous gods; gods of the fields and forest, of the mountain and plain. They have eyes but they see not; ears have they but they hear not. It is all one to them whether there be light or darkness. How can

they relieve the sufferings of humanity, when they themselves are but larger men and women projected on the skies? And the people have found them out! The gods have been put to shame by their own impotence. Plutarch says that the crew of a vessel off the harbor of Palotes heard the sound of vanishing footsteps and a distant cry, "Great Pan is dead!" Milton, in his "Hymn on the Nativity," draws a picture of the flight of the gods:

"The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the archèd roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathèd spell
Inspires the pale-eyed priest from the prophetic cell.

"The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard and loud lament;
From haunted spring and dale
Edgèd with poplar pale,
The parting genius is with sighing sent;
With flower-inwoven tresses torn,
The Nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

"In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lares and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the Flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar Power foregoes his wonted seat."

Perhaps the people, thus abandoning the pagan shrines, may find relief in philosophy? Let us visit

the schools by the Ilyssus and see. Here Zeno walks with his disciples in the Painted Porch, teaching the irresistibleness of fate, "What is to be, must be." Here Plato, in his Academy, teaches truth with a peradventure, and virtue with a mark of interrogation. Here Epicurus, in his Garden, teaches that expediency is the test of action: "We are governed by chance; pleasure is the highest good; death ends all." Here Pyrrho, the father of agnosticism, glorifies doubt, saying, "We affirm nothing; no, not even that we affirm nothing." Sum them all up and you have the philosophy of despair. It finds its supreme expression in the lifted brows and curled lip of Pilate as he contemptuously asks, "What is truth?"

In the meantime, what is the condition of the people? Let us visit the Forum, which is the center of social life. Here are three classes: Patricians, Plebeians, and Slaves. Of the Patricians there are ten thousand in Rome; all wealth, culture, and power are concentrated in their hands. The Plebeians are idlers, housed in tenements at the public cost. They hate work and love pleasure; their cry is, "Bread and Games!" The great body of the population are Slaves, owing to the custom of reducing subjugated peoples to bondage. There are sixty millions of these in the Empire. They live in *ergastula* like beasts of burden, herded in stalls. Cato likens them to "cattle among the straw." All labor is performed by them, and without wages; for the wage-system awaits the word of One who shall say with authority, "The laborer is worthy of his hire."

To the Palace next, where we shall observe the lux-

ury of the time. Augustus is on the throne, and is worshiped as a god. He is surrounded by courtiers who live in unspeakable extravagance. Pliny says that the betrothal robe of Lollia cost forty millions of sesterces! These aristocrats have apparently no thought above the sordid pleasures of life. Matthew Arnold draws this picture:

"On that hard pagan world disgust
And sated loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.
In his cool hall, with haggard eyes,
The noble Roman lay;
Or drove abroad in furious guise
Along the Appian Way.
He made a feast, drank fierce and fast
And crowned his head with flowers;
No easier nor no quicker passed
The impracticable hours."

And thence to the Colosseum. Here are seats for a hundred thousand people. In yonder golden pavilion sit the Emperor and his knights. The lower galleries are set apart for patricians and their households; then the Vestal Virgins; higher up on the stone seats come the Plebeians; and, last of all, freedmen and slaves. At the sound of the trumpet a troop of gladiators file in and salute the Emperor: *Morituri te salutamus!* They fight with one another and with the wild beasts. The sand of the arena is stained with blood. The dead are dragged out. The wounded appeal for mercy; but there is no mercy in the heart of the populace. To die, indeed, is better than to live; for life,

except for the favored few, is not worth living in these days.

But if any survive the cruel ordeal of the Colosseum, where shall they be taken? To the hospitals? There is not one hospital in the Empire! "The world before Christ," says Uhlhorn, "was a world without love." The fate of helpless age and unbefriended childhood is to be exposed to death. The one altar to Pity, at the crossing of the ways, merely emphasizes the prevalent inhumanity. Lepers are thrust out beyond the gates to shift for themselves. Blind beggars sit at the entrance of the temples. The best that can befall the sick is to be laid in the porches of some Bethesda to wait for the moving of the waters, and mayhap to mourn that "there is no one to thrust them in"!

It remains only to visit the Necropolis, the City of the Dead. Here are many gravestones inscribed with the word "Dormit"; but this is the sleep that knows no awaking. "Death ends all." Cicero goes to the tomb of his daughter, Tullia, and, kindling a lamp, mourns, "O my daughter! Is this the quenching of thy life?" Socrates drinks his cup of hemlock, saying, "Whether to live again—I know not." Read on this tombstone, dedicated "To the Eternal Sleep," these words:

> "I was not and I became,
> I was and am no more;
> So much is true, all else is false.
> Traveler, drink, play, come!"

The night is at hand; an unbroken night. The world is a world without God and without hope.

And yet this was the ancient "Golden Age." Art,

science, philosophy, had done their best, with this result. There was no clear vision of truth, no sound basis of character, no just conception of the rights of man, no social or industrial order, no prevalent charity, no real happiness, no thought of salvation from the shame and bondage of sin. The people were "walking in darkness." There was one star only glimmering in the sky; it was the hope of the coming of One who should reveal God.

Then came the daybreak; heralded by the song of the angels: "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to men!" And the old priest sang in the temple, "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us!"

Now nineteen centuries have passed. Light, radiating from the face of Christ, has overspread the earth. The Capitol, the Pantheon, the schools of philosophy, the Forum, the Colosseum, the Necropolis, where are they? The little strip of country around the Mediterranean has widened in concentric circles until almost all the nations of the earth are embraced within it. Almost all! There are four hundred millions of living people who sing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name!" The nations that sat in darkness have seen a great light. Is it the same world? The transformation is more wonderful than any that Ovid ever dreamed of.

To what shall we attribute the marvelous change? There are those who would say, Evolution; yet any tyro knows that even "the fittest" must be nursed and coddled, else it will "revert to its type." There are boundless possibilities of "evolution" in the world if

only there is an Evolver in charge; but unless some Burbank looks after his plant it will surely "go to seed."

Shall we say, then, that the change has been brought about by civilization? True; but civilization does not work automatically. "Law always suggests a lawgiver." A self-perpetuating force, with no engineer at the throttle, is the absurd dream of "perpetual motion." Every clock in the universe is bound to stop sooner or later unless there is somebody to wind it up.

The question is how to account for the fact that Civilization and Christendom are now synonymous terms. Is it a mere coincidence? O unbeliever, great is thy faith! It is far more difficult to believe that the hand-to-hand fellowship of Progress and Christianity is a mere coincidence than it is to believe that the banns are divinely pronounced. The logic that attributes the world's advancement to the power of the Gospel is as irrefutable as that which views a sunlit landscape and says, "The sun hath done it."

But Utopia is not yet. There are wars and rumors of wars. Sin and sorrow, vice and tribulation cut a wide swath among the children of men. But the world grows better every day. And the thing which has been shall be. It is too late to attempt to arrest the light of the sun. The progress already made is our assurance that in fullness of time "the Tabernacle of God shall be among men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God."

The darkest spot still lingering on the earth, where is it? Not in mid-China or Ethiopia. It is the heart

that withholds its meed of gratitude from the Christ who has not only opened the gates of heaven to all believers, but has, by the benignant influence of his Gospel, made this world so good a world to live in. We think of the Incarnation as a great mystery; but a greater is this, that any man or woman at this period of the world's progress should refuse to believe in Christ and welcome the Light of the Sun.

JOURNEY XXII

IN WHICH THE THREE KINGS FOLLOW THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM; AND THE DAY BREAKS

THE king of Judea was troubled. It was rumored that at this time a prince was to be born, in fulfillment of prophecy, who would assume the Jewish throne. Tacitus declares that the opinion was prevalent in the East that the Messiah of Israel was about to appear. Virgil had written his Fourth Eclogue, in which he announced the near approach of the Golden Age. A feeling of expectancy was prevalent everywhere.

Herod was an old man, but still tenacious of his ill-gotten power. He was an apostate Jew, who long ago had forsaken the religion of his fathers to enter the service of the Roman government. His career had been a brilliant one; a protégé of Antony, he had, at a very early age, been made governor of Galilee and afterward tetrarch of Judea. He was a man of vast ambition; shrewd, cunning, and of violent passions; not above the tricks of a demagogue, he was, nevertheless, possessed of much cleverness and vast executive ability. To please his royal master, he built the splendid city of Cæsarea. To conciliate the Jews, whom he hated, he rebuilt their temple and splendidly adorned it.

In the porch of this temple the old king was walking on a February morning nearly 1,900 years ago. His

purple robes sparkled with gems and precious stones; a glorious ruby blazed in his turban; but his restless eyes betrayed a troubled heart. Off yonder, beyond the Kedron, a group of venerable strangers drew near; their long garments covered with dust. They would have attracted attention anywhere. Entering at the eastern or Shushan gate, they climbed the marble stairway of the temple, entered Solomon's porch, and would have passed on into the inner courts but for the admonition of a Levite, who pointed to an inscription on the middle wall of partition, "LET NO GENTILE OR UNCLEAN PERSON ENTER HERE UNDER PENALTY OF DEATH." Arrested by this, they said, "We have come from the far East, seeking him who is born King of the Jews. Tell us where we may find him." A moment later they were engaged in conversation with Herod.

"Whence come ye?"

"From the East."

"And your errand?"

"To find the promised King of the Jews."

"It is a fool's errand; I alone am King of the Jews."

"Nay, we cannot be mistaken, for we have come under divine guidance."

And thereupon they told their story—how, as they were watching the stars according to their custom, and meditating on the great promise of the coming Deliverer, a new luminary wheeled into view and seemed to beckon them. Was this a harbinger of that event for which they looked? While they wondered, it moved on towards the west, and they arose and followed it. Their hope had been that the Jewish

Prince would be found in the Holy City, and they were amazed to find that nothing was here known of him.

The wise men were detained while at Herod's order the members of the Sanhedrin came together to consult as to the rumored birth of this prince. They agreed as to the prophecy. The event was to occur in Bethelehem, as it was written, "And thou, Bethelehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel."

The wise men were then permitted to resume their journey, with a parting injunction that they should return and report as to the success of their singular quest. As they set forth, lo, yonder in the heavens the star reappeared and moved along before them; and they followed with great joy.

We may find profit in the contemplation of these pilgrims. From time immemorial they have been regarded as kings:

> "We three kings of Orient are,
> Bearing gifts, we journey afar;
> Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
> Following yonder star."

In the Cathedral at Cologne there is a golden reliquary in which their relics are preserved in the odor of sanctity. I said to the venerable monk in attendance, "Do you really believe that these are the relics of the Wise Men?"

"O, yes," he replied. "There is no question whatever as to their genuineness; we know their names—Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar. The Venerable Bede tells all about them."

There is, however, a considerable doubt—to put it mildly—as to the trustworthiness of the legends which have gathered about these Magi. We have no reason to suppose they were kings, but we do know that they were truth-seekers; and, as Cromwell said to his daughter, "To be a truth-seeker is to be one of the best sect next to a truth-finder."

I. *The quest.*

Wisdom is the principal thing, and there is nothing better than "to get understanding." All truth is worth having. We blame our children for being inquisitive? But why? John Locke said, "The way to get knowledge is to ask questions." A wiser still has said, "Seek, and ye shall find." The cure for doubt is not a hoodwink, but a telescope. All truth is worth the having, and, therefore, worth the seeking. "Eureka!" cried Archimedes over a certain mathematical discovery. In all the world there is no pursuit so ennobling, so inspiring, and so gladdening as the pursuit of truth. This holds in all provinces, but especially in the province of spiritual things.

It is related of Edmund of Canterbury, who was deeply interested in secular researches, that one night as he was poring over an ancient parchment, the spirit of his dead mother came to him and made three circles upon the palm of his hand, in token of the Holy Trinity, saying as she vanished, "Be this the purpose of thy life." These circles do indeed embrace all. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—and the end also. God is Alpha and Omega, the first and the last. To know him is life eternal.

A man is in his noblest attitude when confronting the great spiritual verities. In this we are distinguished from the lower orders of life. We are able to touch the tremendous problems and measurably to solve them; and herein is the sweetest of life's delights. Lord Bacon said, "It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore and see ships tossing far away upon the sea; it is a pleasure to stand in the castle window and look down upon the battle and the adventures thereof; but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth and beholding spiritual things."

II. *The harbinger.*

God helps every man who earnestly desires to solve the problem of destiny. To these wise men he gave the guiding star. A vast amount of erudition has been spent in the attempt to get rid of the supernatural in these premises. It is said that a remarkable conjunction of certain planets occurred at about this time. In 1604 Kepler saw in the heavens a phenomenon which occurs only once in nearly a thousand years: Saturn and Jupiter were in conjunction; presently Mars also wheeled into line, thus forming "a fiery Trygon in Pisces." The constellation of Pisces, or the Fish, was regarded as symbolical of Judea. The fish was also used by the early Christians as an anagram of Christ. Thus the fiery Trygon was identified with the star of Bethlehem. It is a fascinating hypothesis; but, unfortunately, (1) it did not occur at the precise time of the Advent; and (2) being at an altitude of fifty-seven degrees it could not have paused over a village or a

particular home. We are, therefore, led to regard the star as a special messenger—an angel with a torch, as it were—sent to direct these wise men in their earnest quest. So God interposes in behalf of every sincere seeker for truth. "Seek, and ye shall find." Seek, good friend, and you shall find. God is on your side. Be of good courage.

It was many years ago that a butcher's boy went singing ribald songs about the streets of Nottingham. A taste for knowledge brought him to Cambridge University, where he distinguished himself not only for his cleverness as a student, but as a reviler of Christ. By the unexpected death of a companion he was brought to think seriously of eternal things; his sins weighed heavily upon him; and at Calvary he found pardon. In the early flush of his conversion he wrote his gratitude in the familiar hymn:

"Once on the raging seas I rode;
The storm was loud, the night was dark,
The ocean yawned, and rudely blowed
The wind that tossed my foundering bark.
Deep horror then my vitals froze;
Death-struck, I ceased the tide to stem,
When suddenly a star arose:
It was the Star of Bethlehem!

"It was my guide, my light, my all;
It bade my dark forebodings cease,
And through the storm and danger's thrall
It led me to the port of peace.
Now safely moored, my perils o'er,
I'll sing, first in night's diadem,
For ever and forevermore,
The Star, the Star of Bethlehem!"

God never yet left a man in the lurch who sincerely desired to solve the problem of destiny. It is a true saying, "A seeking sinner finds a seeking Saviour." Somewhere in heaven the star is set that calls and beckons everyone to the fountain of life.

III. *The treasure trove.*

The wise men reached their destination. All the divinely kindled stars lead to Bethlehem. Here is the end of the great quest. The star that guided the Magi rested over a humble cottage. They entered and found the Christ-child—a child upon its mother's breast! Is that all? Ay, all—and everything! In this child all the streams of prophecy converge. From this child radiate all the glowing lines of history. On the walls of the palace at Versailles, in a series of magnificent battle scenes, are portrayed the glories of France. In this humble home at Bethlehem all the hopes of Abraham, the dreams of David, and the visions of Isaiah are realized. This cottage is the center of the world.

The Magi are opening their packs before the Christ-child. The search is over; the problem of destiny is solved. Here is gold for the King; here is myrrh for the Victor; here is frankincense for very God of very God. It is a meet and worthy offering; for indeed, the best is none too good for God.

THE END

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